

THE SOROPTIMIST SWP

a global voice
for women

Soroptimist International



Federation of the South West Pacific



Countries of the
South West Pacific
Federation:
Australia
Cambodia
Fiji Islands
Hong Kong SAR
Indonesia
Malaysia
Mongolia
New Zealand
Papua New Guinea
Samoa
Singapore
Solomon Islands
Thailand

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Soroptimist International of the South West Pacific

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THE SOROPTIMIST -SWP The Magazine of SISWP



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The deadline for the November SWP Magazine is 30 September 2012. The theme will be "**Members matter**"

The last three months have been very busy for SWP. Apologies to all contributors, but there was so much to fit into this edition that I have been forced to edit all articles heavily. All the same, many thanks for such great photos and articles about your projects.

What a successful CofC in NZ! Many thanks to Bev Ditton, SI Logan, and SWP PP Mitch for the CD's full of great conference photos, and to Deidre from the NZ newspaper who covered the Powhiri.

Here I am, in the photo above, at the Red and Black dinner held prior to the Conference with Malaysian friends, and the Cambodian NR.
Kerry

SI GÖZTEPE İzmir, Turkey

Dear Soroptimist Friends,
 I am pleased to cordially invite our Soroptimist sisters from SISWP to participate in the Friendship Tour which will be held in İzmir, May 12 - 26, 2013

This will be a unique opportunity for us to establish strong friendship ties, exchange ideas and experiences. Furthermore, we will introduce our guests to many historical, archeological and natural sites in the vicinity of our town, İzmir, situated on the coast of turquoise Aegean waters. Turkish Soroptimist hospitality, Turkish cuisine and culture will accompany the whole programme.

The programme will include hotel accommodation, all meals, 3 nights in İstanbul; complete Gallipoli tour; daily and/or overnight trips to the ancient sites of Sardis, Ephesus and the Shrine of Virgin Mary, Hierapolis, Laodicea, Aphrodisias, Troy, Pergamon, city tour of Izmir, swimming option at the ancient hot thermal pool in Pamukkale. There will be shopping possibilities and a special Turkish bath - hamam - tradition will be included in our programme. The tour will end with a gala-dinner.

The due date for receipt of applications and final registration is Dec. 31, 2012.

Our references are members of SI Torrens, SI Illawara, SI Cobram Barooga, SI Canberra Inc., SI On The Terrace, SI Cambridge, SI Dusit, SI Sydney, SI Mornington Peninsula who participated in our former tour, 3-13 May 2010.

We recommend that you visit www.kultur.gov.tr to find what our country has to offer visitors. A detailed programme will be sent to those interested upon request. We wish and hope that our friends beyond borders will join us to toast for friendship and enjoy 2 weeks together. Proceeds from the "Friendship Tour" will go to our education programme which now helps 60 students in their further education and supports their families to improve their vision of life.

Price : Single person - double room 1650 Euros. Single room addition: 350 Euros.
 Sincerely,

President Sibel Kışmir Çatalcalı
SI Goztepe

Contact persons:
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The next SWP Biennium



As I take on the Presidency, I feel apprehensive about the many challenges ahead but feel a sense of excitement about the opportunities to make a difference. I am grateful for the many messages of support and help when needed from Past Presidents and the many members I met at the Conference of Clubs in Greymouth.

For those who were not at the Conference of Clubs, I would like to introduce to you our new Federation Board 2012-2014 comprising above from right to left myself as

President, Siew Yong Gnanalingam,
 President Elect, Carolyn Hudson,
 Finance Convenor, Wendy Logan
 Constitution Convenor, Virginia Wilson,
 Programme Director, Robyn Cain
 NR Australia, Annette Korzeba
 NR Fiji, Suman Lata Lal
 NR Indonesia, Any Aryany
 NR Malaysia, Indira Devi Naidu
 NR Singapore, Triena Ong
 NR New Zealand, Annette Smith

Our other NR /non Board members for this biennium are below from L to R
 Sally Betham, Samoa
 Maureen Kwok, Hong Kong
 Judy Muliap, Papua New Guinea
 Altantuya Perenlei, Mongolia
 Sineat Som, Cambodia
 President, Siew Yong
 Sarah Dyer, Solomon Islands and
 Voralak Suwanvanichkij, Thailand (both absent)



FLOWER POWER-STRENGTH IN DIVERSITY

The theme for my biennium captures the beauty and uniqueness of our membership symbolised by the national

flowers of each country. Our diversity of culture, traditions and socio-economic environment gives strength to the many uniquely different and interesting programmes to meet the special needs of women and girls of each country. My theme suggests that we should enjoy our uniqueness and harness and share the strengths of our diversity in being members of SWP.



In Friendship from SWP to SI: President Siew Yong with SI President Alice Wells



In Friendship from SWP to SIGBI: President Siew Yong with SIGBI President Maureen Maguire

Sharing our Diversity Through "Educate. Exchange Connection"

In line with the theme, we are putting into action, our "Educate. Exchange Connection" to promote international friendship, understanding, goodwill and peace among the countries of SWP. We will start small with 17 ambassadors, three from Australia, two from New Zealand, two from Malaysia and one each from the other ten countries of SWP, in the Exchange Programme for a week of cultural immersion, learning and sharing. The Criteria for selection

and process for selection and what is expected of the ambassadors during the programme and on their return, will go out to all clubs as soon as they have been finalised. The co-ordination committee has been formed and will guide the programme on from here.

PROGRAMME IMPACT

On the programme front, we have introduced two projects for the biennium, namely "Walk The Talk" and "A Project for Every Club".

Walk the Talk

We have formed a Federation committee to co-ordinate the implementation of this event. The Committee, as announced in the July issue of SWP Bulletin, has in fact started work. As the "Walk The Talk" event will be held during the UN declared 16 days of activism from Nov 25 – Dec 10, we have to quickly mobilise all clubs and regions to make the event a success.

It is our plan to have our clubs and regions creatively organise all types of walks to generate the hype and publicity to raise our SWP profile, as well as advocate against gender violence.

The SI Region of Malaysia has met with the Girl Guides Association of Malaysia to plan and organise "Walk The Talk - From Perlis to Sabah". three Soroptimists from SI Kota Kinabalu will walk 1200 kms from Perlis to Johor Bahru and fly from Johor Bahru to Kuching and from Kuching to Kota Kinabalu. The journey over 22 days will end in a celebratory walk from Kota Kinabalu airport to the City Centre. They hope to raise the profile of SI in Malaysia as an advocate to end gender violence by getting other NGOs and the public to walk along the route and have several stops at City Centres, to raise awareness of SI and our advocacy theme and attract wide publicity and public donations.

SI Hong Kong reports that the club is challenging their members and the public to walk the talk up the peak to Mount Victoria. All proceeds to go to a local NGO, Rain Lily, a one stop crisis centre for victims of sexual violence.

Continued on Page 4.

Continued from page 3.

A Project for Every Club

Strong programme attracts membership. Our members join because of the work we do and how it can make a difference to women and girls in our community. As such, clubs must carry out projects which are aligned to our SI goals and objectives and will have an impact on the lives of women and girls. I appeal to all clubs to carry out at least one project which meets one of the 5 objectives of SI Programme Goal.

MEMBERS MATTER

On the membership front, we are delighted ie SI Kota Kinabalu (Malaysia), SI Melba (Australia) and SI Erdenet (Mongolia). See stories of Charter on page 8.

There are two more in the pipeline, ie SI Kuching (Malaysia) on the 7th July and SI Mandurah (Western Australia) on 14th September 2012. We look forward to news of more "blooms" in our SWP world.

IMAGE FACTOR

Our clubs do great work but many are publicity shy. As we are not seeking publicity for our personal glory but for the good of the organisation, I am appealing for our clubs to put our cameras to good use and send photographs with articles of your wonderful programmes of service work to the SWP magazine. Let's share our stories so that we learn and be inspired with what each club is doing in its community.

Your local newspaper may be interested in what your club is doing. Publicity will raise our profile to tell the world who we are and what is our mission and how we achieve our goals. With a higher profile we can attract more members and funding for our projects.

SWP President 2012-2014
Siew Yong Gnanalingam



Conference of Clubs, Greymouth New Zealand, May 4-6 2012



Friday 4th May.

The shuttle bus departed for the station at 6.30am. There were a number of shuttle buses each holding 11 people with a trailer behind for the luggage. It took about 15 minutes to the railway station, then we waited until there were 300 of us before boarding the TranzAlpine train. There seemed to be 12 carriages and two dining cars, and a car that had a viewing platform with an open side for people to take photographs. We were given a lunch box about 10am, and as most of us had not had breakfast we were starving and ate the yummy contents straight away. Coffee and tea were served an hour later. It was hot and wet but didn't taste like coffee.



The whole train journey took four hours travelling through magnificent scenery from snow capped mountains, and wide glacial river plains to deep river gorges covered in tree ferns. Several Soroptimists from the warmer countries saw snow for the first time. We arrived



at Greymouth to glorious sunshine, and boarded buses that took us to the replica gold rush town of Shantytown. On arrival we were treated to a Powhiri (traditional Maori welcome) at the entrance, this was mainly a male ceremony, Bob Moffat and Richard Simpson represented SWP. (see above)



The opening ceremony started at 3.30pm in the Welshmans Hall. The National flags were presented by girl guides accompanied by the National Representatives and representatives of the three other Federations.

The chairs were all set out with the red conference bags onto which SI Westland had sewn individual badges to make identification easy. The room looked very colourful.

Our efficient MC was Maureen Pugh SI Westland. She is also the Mayor of the Westland District Council. President Yvonne welcomed everyone to the Conference. Carolyn Hudson introduced the Honorable Jo Goodhew, to officially open the Conference. Jo is NZ Minister of Women's Affairs.



The former Prime Minister of NZ, Helen Clark, who is now Administrator of the UN Development Programme, was unable to attend but sent a video thanking SWP for our work in the UN with women and children. She congratulated us on our *Birthing in the Pacific* project.

The third speaker, Brittany Packer, was a dynamic 20 year old who has been passionate about climate change since the age of 8. She used the term Climate Refugees to describe the effect Climate Change will have on the world's low lying islands.



The participants were addressed by the two candidates for the position of President Elect, Theresa Lyford, SI Brighton, Victoria was the first to speak, followed by Carolyn Hudson, SI Hornsby NSW. The delegates were asked to vote for their choice of PE then leave their voting cards in the boxes provided as they exited at the end of the session.



Before beginning the business of the day Yvonne spoke of the advantages of SWP being a company. How this will give greater financial protection to members, being able to apply for deductible gift recipient status, and being eligible to apply for UN attendance. But, she warned us that with increased rights comes increased responsibilities.

Prior to the Conference, all clubs had received a notice with the Special Resolutions (motions) listed, each delegate had been instructed by their club on how to vote. At 10.15am Yvonne called for voting for Structure of Conference and the delegates voted on two motions before we left for morning tea. Delicious homemade scones and huge bowls of jam and cream with which to spread all over the scones and ourselves.

After morning tea, Christine Johnstone demonstrated her new DVD for helping clubs with promotion. At the end of this Yvonne announced that Carolyn Hudson is now the new PE. She then introduced SI President, Alice Wells, who spoke on Commission of the Status of Women UN. Alice had attended the 56th session last April. Alice also spoke of her involvement with *Birthing In the Pacific* project and her visit to PNG.



MC Maureen introduced May Lamont, to speak on BIP in place of Janet Askern who was ill and unable to attend. May told us of her first BIP visit and meeting with PNG women who asked May for things, like buckets and gloves. Her second visit was very different. Talking to the midwives so proud to be trained and the confidence it had given them knowing that SWP would give them support. She spoke of the programme SI Lae has introduced, and that AusAid has supported.



She explained how the project had changed from the original Public Health midwife project to a Village Health training project. The midwife project will continue in the Port Moresby area. Lunch was set out smorgasbord style in a marquee. Mounds of hot chicken, battered fish, rice, steamed vegetables, fresh fruit, and cake. Plenty for all.

Workshops after lunch.

Anusha Santhirasthipam - using IT programmes online for advocacy
Christine Johnstone - Social media using websites, facebook, and twitter.

The main speaker was Peri Drysdale who founded Snowy Peak Ltd in 1981. This company knitted the first ever garment using possum fibre blended with merino wool in 1992. Untouched World TM, a lifestyle clothing range in high performance merino and natural fibre fabrics followed in 1998. The Untouched World Charitable Trust, which focuses on Leadership Education, in the context of environmental and social projects, was established in 2000 by the Company.



Then, Julie Marsaban woke us up with a Zumba. After this Tony Kokshoorn, the Mayor of Geymouth, gave us a complimentary chat about SI before introducing Julia Bradshaw. Julia is the Director of Hokitika Museum. She is currently researching stories about women during the NZ gold rush period. After all this, we moved from the seated area in Welshman's Hall to the Golden Nugget Salon for the Kiwiana Friendship Evening, where the accompanying persons all joined us.



Saturday 5th May

We were seated by 8.15am and President Yvonne started with a run down on yesterday's events. Then, we did the roll call. There were members present from all but Solomon Islands. Next we listened to a brief President's report. (Read it in full on the website).

Julie Marsaban, *The Gentle Gender Game* using the UN Millenium Development Goal No. 3 Gender Equality.
 Karen Eagles, *Extension - Bringing in new members*



May Lamont, with help from some PNG girls (pictured above) demonstrated how to make a birthing doll. .
 Afternoon tea, and those scones again!!



The second session of workshops.

Robyn Cain and Theresa Lyford, (seated above) discussing their workshop on the importance of Programme.
 A social anthropologist, Dr Donna Swift's workshop used research about the change of anti-social behaviour in young girls of today.
 Eileen Mitchell (Mitch) took the animal personality questionnaire, we had filled out on the train from Christchurch, a lot further. She stressed the need for using different personalities to create a workable committee within our clubs.
 A Fundraising workshop ran by Suzanne Sullivan SIA. emphasised that choosing a project wisely will motivate your members and attract donors. Susanne raised \$100 for BIP during her workshop.
 May's second workshop was about the PNG projects that complemented BIP, and how SI Lae was reaching out to remote areas to support Village Birthing Attendants.



The New Zealand team of Conference Helpers under the Chairperson, Christine Stet

After the National meetings the buses took everyone back to their hotels for a free evening.

Sunday 6th May

Yvonne started the meeting at 9am and thanked the workshop presenters with a gift to each of a green stone necklet.

The remainder of the Special Resolutions were dealt with by the delegates during the morning's business session. *The minutes of the business sessions have been distributed to all clubs since the Conference.*

Maureen Maguire SIGBI President, told the participants that SIGBI has set up a Federation Project with the aim to raise \$100k in two years for a maternal and child health joint project between MCAI and SIGBI in Gambia. President Maureen then handed over a donation to Maureen, President, SI Christchurch for the Christchurch appeal

MC Maureen introduced Debra Taylor-Hayhurst Executive Director of *Dress for Success*. This is mainly a volunteer organisation whose aim is to assist women to re-enter the work force with the provision of free clothing, and career interview experience. Robyn Cain came to the stage to announce the Best Practice Awards. *Read all about them in June 2012 SPAN*

Yvonne now summed up her last two years as President of SWP. She then thanked people personally who had assisted her during her term, her committee and those who have been there for her when needed. Yvonne was given a standing ovation

After lunch Siew Yong introduced her new team. *Read SWP President Siew Yong's address on Page 3.*

The buses took us back to the hotels and we had two hours to rest and get ready for the Gala Dinner. We are on the buses by 5.30 to return to Shantytown, where proceedings started straight away. MC

Maureen invited the IPP, President, the new President, and the new PE all up on the stage. Then, Richard Simpson was invited to make the toast to Soroptimism. It was a very stirring speech where he acknowledged Yvonne and praised the organisation. SI President, Alice Wells replied on behalf of SI.



Everyone on stage exchanged badges and Yvonne made her final speech during which she presented Siew Yong with a bag. This bag contained all the useful goodies she had purchased for Siew Yong to help her with the new job. It was very funny, as it contained many items, from batteries to recharge her energy, and a feather boa, to fairy wings to help her fly. Then Yvonne took off the SWP President's chain of office and placed it over Siew Yong's head. It was a very emotional moment for both.

The Malaysian members performed the "Dikir Barat" a Malaysian "rap" for our entertainment and to congratulate President Siew Yong. They were dressed in red and black in support of SI Christchurch.

After all this we enjoyed a delicious meal and then we partied!!

Editor



SI Malaysia members after performing the "Dikir Barat"



Meryl Caldwell-Smith is pictured above with IPP Yvonne Simpson after receiving an Honorary Life Membership of SWP



There were 13 SWP Past Presidents present. From top left: Eileen Mitchell, Christine Paton, Leigh Ellwood-Brown. Joanne Fernandez, Delores Caboche, Pat Strickland, Elaine Moffat, Lorna Mead. Seated from left: Yvonne Simpson, Jane Zimmerman, Margaret Lobo, Meryl Caldwell-Smith, Betty Loughead-Turland



Friday night saw everyone enjoying the Friendship evening. There are 4 countries represented in this picture

MERYL CALDWELL-SMITH A.M

Category "Nursing Executive" (Retired)
Meryl was involved in 1955 as a Founder member of Woollahra club and then continued to hold positions as Secretary, President and/or Delegate, throughout the next 17 years. She was involved during the transition of Divisional Union (region); Co-ordinating Committee of Soroptimist Clubs of Australia and NZ, and after Fiji joined in 1971, she became the President of the Council of Soroptimist Clubs of SWP.

In 1971 she was awarded the Churchill Fellowship to "Look at mental retardation facilities for the severally and profoundly retarded and nursing education", and in 1985 awarded Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for services to Nursing and the Community

1998 - 2012 she became a member of SI Goulburn and has held positions of Region Delegate and Friendship Link Coordinator. Meryl has attended all CSWP and SISWP Conferences from 1957 to 2012, and has also attended all SI Conventions from 1987 to present

Anne Sheehan
SI Region of NSW



Five of the SWP Appointees line up with President Siew Yong



Mitch was presented with a feather duster bouquet

SI Sydney turns 75

and we are celebrating with a party.

- Date: 13 October 2012
- Venue: Kirribilli Club
11 Harbourview Crescent
Lavender Bay NSW 2060
- Time: 7pm for 7.30pm
- Cost: \$95
- RSVP: sisydney@siswp.org

Your presence at our party would make our night

3 SWP clubs chartered

SI Kota Kinabalu, the 14th club of Malaysia, was chartered on the 14th April 2012. The East Malaysian club was chartered with High Tea for 200 guests at the Hyatt Hotel, Kota Kinabalu. The club was honoured to have the local minister Datuk Jainab Ahmad, the Assistant Minister of Information Technology, Sabah State, to grace the occasion. The President of SI SWP Yvonne Simpson, signed the charter. PE Siew Yong attended along with the President of Soroptimist Region of Malaysia, Joanne Yeoh. Other



Soroptimist members from Kuala Lumpur were also present that evening. SI KK has 18 members, and the President is Farida Shukoor, President Elect Chin Tet Fung, Audrey Fung, Extension convenor, Yanti Abbas, Extension Public relations along with Secretary Noraini Idris, and Treasurer Vilina John. The Hyatt Hotel ballroom was decorated in the Soroptimist colours and tables had yellow flowers. The ladies wore scarves patterned with yellow and blue motifs on a white background. The club members were donated Soroptimist badges, banners and also cash given by sister Soroptimists from Singapore, and New Zealand. The local minister also donated cash for the club's programmes in the state.

Farida Shukoor, SI Kota Kinabalu

The Charter of SI Melba, was an intimate cocktail party held on April 21, 2012 at the Queen Victoria Women's Centre in Melbourne. Here twenty excited Charter members and guests dressed up for an evening to remember. We were extremely honoured to have present International President Alice Wells; SWP President Yvonne Simpson and Region President Anne Binkley, Maggie Mitchell, Region Extension and Theresa Lyford, SI Victoria IPP were on hand throughout the Charter process to offer their invaluable advice. Our Guest of Honour, the City of Melbourne's Lady Mayoress, Emma Page Campbell, made an impassioned speech about the importance of community involvement of SI clubs



and very warmly welcomed us into the City's community. Friends and family passed around drinks and food catered by the Sorghum Sisters. An abundance of beautiful flowers (from a member's family garden) were arranged around the room. Charter members all proudly accepted their SI badges and pins from SWP President Yvonne. President SI Melba, Kerry Beer, spoke on our mission to concentrate on Education and Leadership through Advocacy.

Wendy Brakey, SI Melba

SI Erdenet, Mongolia, 23 June 2012, After two years of hard work, the Mongolian past NR, Oyungerel Retensen, together with Pro tem President Shurentsetseg and NR Altantuya hosted SISWP President Siew Yong and Karen Eagles, SISWP Extension, at the Charter of the third SI club in Mongolia. Also attending were past NR Australia Catherine Evans, and Marie Mitchell and Helen Elder, SI New Plymouth NZ. Following the Mongolian National Anthem and Long Song (a traditional Mongolian song from the

steppes), throat singing and modern ballroom dancing exhibition, the 20 members attending, of the signed 34, were presented with an embossed certificate and membership badge by President Siew Yong. Then Siew Yong and SI Erdenet President Shurentsetseg signed the Charter. A sumptuous meal was provided including a traditional yummy lemon and coconut cake called "Xeviin boov". Siew Yong made an excellent speech and also donated a club banner. Presenting the beautiful Chain of Office to Shurentsetseg was the final part with all members rising to recite the pledge. Following exhibitions by contortionists, dancers and singers, presents were given. SI Ulaan Bataar, donated a computer, SI Darkhan presented a glorious rose basket and Rotary presented each Soroptimist with a pink rose.



Karen Eagles, SWP Extension



SWP President Siew Yong cutting the ribbon at opening of Paediatric Intensive care ward at Erdenet Hospital

Changing lives - Mongolia

My first pleasant duty as President of SWP took me to Mongolia to charter SI Erdenet. SI Erdenet had already worked on a project months ago and I had the wonderful honour to officially launch the "Intensive Care Ward" for children at the Regional Diagnostic Centre, just hours before the charter ceremony. The ward originally a storeroom and old kitchen was restored and refurbished with 6 beds and 6 baby cots. More equipment, like oxygen apparatus will be added later. President Shurentsetseg, at an after dinner gathering around a fireside in a Ger in the beautiful countryside, briefed us on SI Erdenet's plans for a programme to teach young teenage girls about personal care and hygiene, personal safety and life skills. The club has also embarked on a tree replanting project in an area near the city.

On our journey to Erdenet we made a stop at a town called Shariin Gol, to officiate at the opening of a kindergarten (set up in a Ger) for young children of the Kazakh minority. The next morning, SI Darkhan, took us to visit a Ger for a young single mother with two children.



L to R: President Norjin SI Darkhan, NR Altantuya, the young woman and her family and President Siew Yong

We also visited a greenhouse project run by four women as a "cooperative". The women are also involved in cross stitching pieces of beautiful wall hangings and tailoring of Mongolian garments for sale.

The President of SI Darkhan, Norjinhand also announced a new project to provide pre-teen girls education on personal hygiene, and pregnancy and ante-natal education for girls aged 16 and above.

At Ulaan Baatar, President Tugsoyun of our first club in Mongolia proudly took our team of Karen Eagles and Catherine Evans, SI Gold Coast, to visit a factory operated by blind persons, for whom the club has been providing regular health screening. A room is also being furnished with exercise equipment for the visually impaired workers.



Renovated room by SI Darkhan for the blind and partially sighted to do exercises so they do not suffer from RSI etc - physio and exercises assist them to keep healthy and strong

It was unfortunate that the weather did not permit us to visit a reserve outside the city where the club has been involved in planting of fir trees. We were however able to visit the national centre for women victims of violence instead. The club supports the shelter with regular supply of food and clothes for the women and children.

Being able to witness so many wonderful and diverse projects by our three clubs across Mongolia truly made me proud that this is but a small reflection of the meaningful and exemplary contributions our clubs of SWP are making to change lives in our communities.

SWP President, Siew Yong



The greenhouse was provided by SI New Plymouth represented by Marie Mitchell and Helen Elder



SWP President Siew Yong opened the Summer kindergarten ger at Shariin Gol, pictured here with members of SI Darkhan and guests.

A summer ger 'kinder'

SI Darkhan members met our Ulaan Baatar contingent on the roadside south of Darkhan and then we went on an 'off-road' ramble which took us across the green grasslands or Steppes set against the backdrop of massive mountain ranges from Ulaan Baatar to Darkhan. We drove for a couple of wet and windy hours to get to Shariin Gol about 160 kilometers south of Darkhan, in Uul Province. A cooler facility was desperately needed for many ethnic Kazakh children to house their kindergarten during the hot summer months, Members of several clubs from the Netherlands assisted SI Darkhan in providing funds for this ger.

The Kindergarten Director, Altantuya Nadmid, and the children were delighted with the gift of the ger. All had waited patiently in their party clothes for us to arrive even though we were very late. A suitable ribbon cutting ceremony by President Siew Yong assisted by the Director and SI Darkhan President Norjinhand occurred, a couple of small girls delighted us with their singing, and then we all entered the ger, the children seating themselves in their 'new house'. Each of the 25 small children received a bag of goodies from SI Darkhan, and a knitted beanie (pic below) from SI Upper Hutt, NZ. The Director also received a collection of pencils, books and paints to be shared amongst the children. A happy visit was celebrated afterwards with lunch.

Catherine Evans. SI Gold Coast,





SI Lautoka provides supplies

The rebuilding of lives after the two recent floods in Fiji is proving to be an immense task for most of the affected families. One such family in the Lovu Seaside area in Lautoka was assisted on May 26 by SI Lautoka with building supplies worth \$300 to rebuild their house which suffered during the floods.

The Jitend Kumar family is very grateful for the club's assistance as now they finally see their dream of moving swiftly back into their home fulfilled.

Zareena Bi
SI Fiji



SI Labasa members presenting school fees to students of Labasa Arya Secondary.

SI Lautoka assists students in Labasa

Four needy students in Labasa were assisted with their school fees by SI Lautoka which was facilitated by SI Labasa.

The families of these students were facing a lot of difficulties since they are dependent on social welfare to make ends meet. The students expressed their appreciation for being able to continue their school year without the tension about their school fees. The funding for the scholarships came from the Fiji Melbourne club towards the end of last year. SI Lautoka hopes to continue assisting the students in the North who are usually deprived of such scholarships because of their geographical location.

Zareena Bi
SI Fiji



Christchurch's misfortune is a mother's gain in PNG

SI Christchurch and St Georges Hospital combined to send much needed goods for the project "Birthing in the Pacific" to Papua New Guinea with their NR Judy Muliap. These will be used by midwives and trainee assistants in the clinics and villages in PNG. Support in the form of goods and money is essential for ongoing training.

St Georges "Birthing Unit" had been demolished following the earthquake. It has been re-opened only for post natal care at present, so was able to donate equipment not required for birthing. As an SI Christchurch member is on the hospital staff, she was able to arrange this with the Maternity Manager. We were delighted to send Judy Muliap off to PNG with a bag of goodies.

Photo above Ralda Forzin, NR PNG Judy Muliap, SWP PP Mitch, Lesley Fursdon, Catherine Evans, SI President Alice Wells, and President Maureen Lough, SI Christchurch.

Lesley Fursdon
SI Christchurch



SI George Town's birthday

Photo above from left: SIGT President Maureen Gupta, Catherine Evans IPNR Australia, Charter member and Past Int. President Jane Zimmerman, Ann Thomas, Region President

The club celebrated 30 years of community service with a high tea at local tea rooms. Members from SI Launceston, SI Burnie and SI Devonport joined in the fun.

SIPP Jane Zimmerman,
SI George Town



Helping Afghanistan

Celebrating International Women's Day; SI of The Hills District was involved in the preparation of a breakfast on the morning of International Women's Day Thursday 8th March. The breakfast was planned jointly by SI of The Hills District Inc., UN Women Australia, BPW Parramatta, the Greater West Inc., the Zonta Clubs of Nepean Valley Inc. and Sydney Hills Inc.

Approximately 230 people attended to hear the keynote speaker Mahboba Rawi. In 1984, as a schoolgirl and leader of student demonstrations in Afghanistan, Mahboba was forced to flee after the Russian invasion. She lived in a refugee camp in Pakistan for two years, married and subsequently moved to Australia.

Mahboba is now the Director of "Mahboba's Promise" Foundation, which is an Australian non-profit organization dedicated to helping the women and children of Afghanistan,

Janine Drummond
SI of the Hills Inc



New member

I had the privilege, as our Gore club President was ill, of inducting my daughter Sue Addison as a member of SI Gore. It was made even more special as I was able to use my mother's and Sue's grandmother's, the late Nan Hildyard's, Soroptimist badge. Nan had been a member of both Invercargill and Nelson.

Anne Gover, SWP Secretary



Photo above: Joy Oakly, President SI Nelson, Bill O'Brien, Lynne Ehau, President SI Waimea, Sheryl Waterhouse, Chair organising committee and Lesley Elliott

Lesley Elliott visit is sponsored by SI Waimea and SI Nelson, June 20th

Lesley Elliott is a very brave mother who has set up a foundation to educate young women to realise that an abusive/ destructive relationship is not OK. Sophie, Lesley's daughter, had been in an on/off relationship with her tutor at University. The relationship lasted less than five months and she was murdered on the day she was to move to a new city and the job of her dreams. Lesley said that neither she nor Sophie recognised the signs of an abusive relationship and she now urges people to look at various agencies on the Web.

Web: *The Sophie Elliott Foundation*

The afternoon presentation at Nelson College for Girls was attended by year 12 and 13 girls and the evening meeting by over 400 parents, interested public and some younger pupils. All members of Waimea and Nelson came away with the satisfaction that the message is out there and hopefully our young women will take heed.

**Annette Smith
SI Waimea**

Red and Black dinner

The SWP President's Red and Black Appeal for earthquake damaged Christchurch was generously supported by clubs all around the world. The funds raised have been carefully administered by SI Christchurch, even while they have been dealing with their own personal traumas: such is the Soroptimist spirit.

Preceding the conference there was an opportunity on Thursday, May 3 for Soroptimists and their partners to tour Christchurch in the afternoon and see the extensive damage. An invitation was also extended to participants to attend an evening dinner dressed in Red and Black to show solidarity with Christchurch.

We welcomed recipients to whom Deputy Mayor Ngaire Button spoke on the plans to rebuild "the city in a garden". SI Christchurch President Maureen gave a



summary of the challenges and a heart felt vote of thanks to those who had given so generously.

IPP Yvonne



At the Conference of Clubs, four members from SI Bendigo Inc requested a publicity shot as they handed over a cheque to the PNG Soroptimists for the Birthing in the Pacific project



Unexpected visitor

SI Shepparton were thrilled to welcome President Yvonne Simpson in April. Yvonne, in Melbourne to charter SI Melba, took the opportunity to visit a country club

Carla Farrell, SI Shepparton Inc



SI Geraldton turns 35

SI Geraldton celebrated it's birthday over the June long weekend. Members, visitors and guest speakers gathered for a meet and greet on Friday evening, and a workshop with the interesting guest speakers on Saturday morning.

We celebrated our 35th birthday with a dinner on Saturday night at *The Boatshed* where President Roni thanked everyone for coming to the celebrations.

Sunday morning we met at member Marge Millman's house to induct our newest member, "Pearl", who was actually made by members of flotsam and jetsam for a Geraldton competition. She had been on display at the Latitude Pearls store. SIPP Margaret Lobo inducted 'Pearl' into SI Geraldton - A woman of strength and determination. We took photos and welcomed our newest member into the club. (Photo left) Then off we went for lunch and of course the birthday cake.

**Florence Brennan
SI Geraldton Inc.**



What has women's reproductive rights got to do with sustainable development?

Everything - women around the world would say, because we know how closely linked reproductive health is to issues ranging from poverty and food security to climate change and beyond. This message was precisely what women's organisations brought to the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. I was in Rio de Janeiro heading our SI delegation and our team was very active and vocal in all the deliberations, negotiations and interventions at UN organized events from 16-22 June 2012.

Currently, there are more than 7 billion people on the planet, and the UN predicts that number will reach 9.3 billion by midcentury. Much of the population growth will be in developing countries where reproductive rights are sorely lacking, which also happens to be areas that are highly vulnerable to climate change. An unstable climate coupled with a lack of reproductive rights threatens future generations.

According to the UN Population Fund, around 215 million women, or one in six women of reproductive age, want to delay or cease childbirth. and if all women had access to effective contraception, one in three deaths related to pregnancy and childbirth could be prevented.

"The only way to respond to increasing human numbers and dwindling resources is through the empowerment of women", said Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, former Prime Minister of Norway and former Director-general of the World Health Organisation.

"It is through giving women access to education, knowledge, to paid income, independence and of course access to reproductive health services, reproductive rights, access to family planning, she elaborated, adding that no other way existed to change the current "pattern of human consumption".

Women leaders have been sending a powerful message to the world that sustainable development is not just about deforestation, climate change and carbon emissions. Equally as important to sustainable development are gender equality and human rights, which include sexual and reproductive rights. But the reality is that many countries in the world still do not ensure that women have access to full reproductive rights and health.

SWP Federation Project "Birthing in the Pacific" which has been embraced by SI as the SI President's December 10th Appeal was rolled out in response to the dire need for safe birthing and maternal health in PNG. There are several other countries in Asia and Africa with high statistics for mortality of mothers and babies due to lack of reproductive healthcare.

Twenty years ago, the Rio earth summit saw unanimous agreement that sustainable development cannot be realised without gender equality. Yet, the Rio+20 outcome document agreed upon by all Governments saw severe compromises with references to women's reproductive rights and gender equality being scrapped.

Rio+20 Outcome document did affirm women's rights and gender equality in several key sections, for example, green economy, food security and sustainable production, just to name a few. However, in several other areas, we saw backsliding. The declaration has many weaknesses, but there are key passages on women as central partners in decision-making. This is better than what was attained in Rio twenty years ago.

Its clear that reproductive rights are essential to improve health outcomes and to allow for the full participation of women in our economies. Furthermore, women's vital role in sustainable development has long been recognized. Instead of the earlier language that would ensure *rights to own property, inheritance, credit, and to financial and extension services*, which came from the Beijing forum, the Rio+20 outcome. Text

only calls for legislation to include *access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, credit, inheritance, natural resources, and appropriate new technology*. This may not seem like a significant difference but **rights** to own property, inheritance, and credit is very different to granting rights to have **access** to these resources.

Land rights for women are of critical significance for sustainable development. If women had the same access to resources, from 20 percent to 30 percent, **farm yields would increase** which would feed 100 million to 150 million people, children, women, and men who would otherwise go hungry. But **only between 10 percent and 20 percent** of women in developing countries have land rights. In addition, women **hold fewer assets and face more difficulty** attaining credit. Women's empowerment is critical in transitioning to **sustainable agricultural practices** that can manage the sector's large greenhouse gas contributions and ensure food security.

Women's equality is **integral to success**. Policymakers at Rio had an opportunity to steer the future toward a more inclusive and prosperous economy for all and left Rio with the glass "half full". Although it is too late now for any Government or stakeholder group to ask for the text to be reopened or revised. Women's organisations, like SI can do much in the aftermath of Rio+20 to educate, empower and enable women and girls to pursue their rights to reproductive health.

Women heads of state and government gathered at the Rio+20 women leaders' summit remained undaunted and placated women's organisations in attendance by pledging that the document they signed would not be lost in the "forest of declarations on gender issues". They urged governments, civil society and the private sector to prioritise gender equality and women's empowerment in their sustainable development efforts.

"We know from research that advancing gender equality is not just good for women, it is good for all of us. When women enjoy equal rights and opportunities, poverty, hunger and poor health decline and economic growth rises", said Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director of UN Women.

Anusha Santhirasthiam
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