

Peace News December 2007

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Greetings from Susie Burke, National Convenor

Dear PFP members,

We seem to be ending the year with a sense of a new beginning! A new Prime Minister has been elected, an apology to Indigenous Australians seems imminent, and there is the hope that troops will start to be withdrawn from Iraq in 2008. It feels like a hopeful start to the end of the year!

This edition of peace news brings several announcements of peace prize winners, and I would like to congratulate the winners, the other participants, and the PFP members who put in such an amazing effort to organise, promote and put on these events. Well done to all.

Have a wonderful festive season.

Yours in peace,

Susie Burke

WA Biennial Peace Art Exhibition and Award

Congratulations to the WA group for all their hard work in organising this event, which helps to explore issues of peace-making for young people. The exhibition was held at The State Library of WA, Northbridge, and successfully gained recognition and funding

support from City of Perth and the Medical Association for the Prevention of War. Well done!

This year's theme was "Peace Between Diverse Cultures". The event is a prize for Year 11 Art students, and was won this year by Carina McPherson of Sacred Heart College for her work entitled *The Peace Journey*. 27 works were exhibited from 5 schools. This year, for the first time since the award began in 2005, a country school also participated.

For more info, go to the photo gallery at <http://psychs-for-peace.blogspot.com/>

View our album direct

<http://picasaweb.google.com.au/psychs.for.peace/2007PeaceArtAwardAndExhibitionPeaceBetweenDiverseCultures>

The next peace art exhibition and award will be held in 2009.

SA Children's Peace Literature Award

The SA group have also been working hard, and have just announced the winner of the 2007 Award. Congratulations to **Michael Gerard Bauer** for his book *Don't Call Me Ishmael*, which was selected from seven short-listed books and from more than 100 entries of books for children published from August 2005 to July 2007. The Award was presented to Michael in front of enthusiastic students at the William Light Reception – Yr 12 School in Plympton, Adelaide.

It's great to see the ongoing work of the SA group, who have been running this Award for 20 years, and their focus on fostering peace-building for our young people. Congratulations, not only to the winner and finalists, but to all who worked to make it happen.

CPLA prize winning and short listed books make wonderful Christmas presents for young people, so check out the list of finalists on our website.

Go to <http://www.groups.psychology.org.au/awards/literature/#2007-winner>

APS National Conference – Brisbane

There was plenty of activity at the 2007 APS National Conference in September for those with an interest in PFP and our work.

AGM

There was the PFP AGM, with an inspiring roundup of group activities for the year. To read more, see <http://www.groups.psychology.org.au/pfp/news/minutes/>

Symposia

On the same day as the AGM, we held our two Symposia, Peace-promoting Research with Children and Adolescents and Towards Developing Constructive Peace-Building and Post-Conflict Processes, which were well attended. Thanks go to all the presenters, Jodie Lodge, Christine Wood, Margot Trinder and Liz Freeman, Sowmya Devaraj, Melissa O'Connor, Peggy Koutsos, Adela Ristovski, as well as Tony Thompson and Eleanor Wertheim who chaired the sessions. During one of the sessions, Peggy Koutsos presented her honours research "Paths to interpersonal forgiveness: The role of personality, dispositional forgiveness and situational forgiveness", and was acknowledged as the winner of the 2006 PFP Peace Research Award. Sowmya Deveraj, who was also acknowledged for an honourable mention of the Peace Research Award, presented "Application of the elaboration likelihood model to understand biases in credibility judgments made about Aboriginal individuals".

Psychologists and Torture

The issue of psychologists' involvement in torture and interrogation came to the fore, both before and at the Conference, with the presence of Dr Gerald P Koocher (past APA president) as a keynote speaker. To read more about this, see <http://www.groups.psychology.org.au/Assets/Files/APS-Torture-Links.pdf>

As part of a response to Dr Koocher's presence, and the questions it raised for many APS members, a forum was held, titled "Lessons from Guantanamo: Ethical Issues for psychologists working in the military, intelligence and detention facilities." Forum participants were Dr Koocher, Heather Gridley (PFP and College of Community Psychologists member), Amanda Gordon (APS president) and Dr. Chris Lennings from the University of Sydney, who has been involved in research and advocacy in relation to the mental health of detainees in places like Villawood and Baxter. The forum was chaired by Professor Graham Davidson. To read Heather's forum presentation, see <http://www.groups.psychology.org.au/Assets/Files/Torture-forum-H.Gridley.pdf>

For background to this issue, read the Psychologists for Social Responsibility Nov 2006 report "RETHINKING THE PSYCHOLOGY OF TORTURE: A Preliminary Report from Former Interrogators and Research Psychologists" at <http://www.groups.psychology.org.au/Assets/Files/MR-APA-rethinking-torture.pdf>

NT Intervention/Statement from the Mutitjulu People

Back in the days (all those weeks/months ago) of the previous Federal government, the NT Intervention was launched, in the name of fighting child abuse in Indigenous Communities. At the time, we posted this statement from the Mutitjulu people on the

PFP website.

Read their statement at <http://www.groups.psychology.org.au/pfp/news/#Mutitjulu>

During the election campaign, the ALP supported the government's action, and since winning government, has promised to continue the intervention, but it will review the welfare quarantine and the five year leases after a year, as well as promising to reinstate permits and reform the work-creation CDEP program.

A High Court action is about to be launched by the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation, which will "...challenge the legality of the Commonwealth's five-year acquisition of land under the intervention and question its ability to seize the assets of Indigenous corporations. They will also challenge the scrapping of the permit system..." (The Age, 08/12/07).

Read more here: <http://www.theage.com.au/news/national/high-court-challenge-to-nt-intervention/2007/12/07/1196813026893.html>

Invitation: The Australian Peace Prize Award Presentation - Melbourne

To be awarded to Julian Burnside QC for his work with refugees, by The Peace Organisation of Australia.

When: Thursday 20 December, 7.00pm

Where: Green Building, 60 Leicester St, Carlton.

Drinks and finger food provided. All are welcome to attend.

For more info, contact peace@poa.org.au

New Online Journal

To read the new online journal for Social Action in Counselling and Psychology, "Social Action", sponsored by Psychologists for Social Responsibility and Counsellors for Social Justice, click here

<http://www.psyr.org/jsacp>

Book Review

Dead bodies don't count: Civilian casualties and the forgotten costs of the Iraq Conflict written by Richard Hill and Paul Wilson.

Dr Arthur Veno, a PFP member, reviewed the book, and writes, "This is an extraordinary book for many reasons. It is beautifully written for intelligent audiences and, to date is the only explicated and developed critical analysis of the machinations of the remaining world superpower to justify the holocaust occurring in Afghanistan, Iraq and (soon) Iran."

To read more, see <http://www.groups.psychology.org.au/pfp/news/#dead-bodies>

A Just Australia – Nauru Christmas Appeal

AJA is running a Christmas appeal for the 72 Sri Lankan and 8 Burmese still stuck on Nauru. We can only hope that the Sri Lankans who have been found to be refugees will be brought to Australia soon, but that is unlikely to happen before the end of the year, if at all. They need phone cards and other things, but the easiest way to provide this is to donate money so that we can help the advocates purchase what is needed closer to the date (which may be settlement items if our Christmas wishes come true). You can donate online at http://www.ajustaustralia.com/thingsyoucando_donatemoney.php - please mark your donation as "Nauru" in the comments field. Or send a cheque or money order to A Just Australia "Nauru Appeal" 37-47 St Johns Rd, Glebe NSW 2037.

PFP Member Dan Loton at the Our World in Crisis Course

PFP member Dan Loton attended the recent Our World In Crisis course, run by Prof Joe Camilleri of La Trobe University Centre for Dialogue. PFP is one of the course's sponsors.

Dan writes, "The OWIC course was a blistering, stimulating crash-course covering a variety of political topics and contemporary, yet long debated, global issues ... The issues addressed by the course are at the heart of the biggest debates and divides observable in our world today. These are hotly debated topics, theorised as central to the forces that shape human life across the globe, and with little easy answers."

Read more at <http://www.groups.psychology.org.au/pfp/news/#owic>

Dan finished his Bachelor of Psychology, Honours last year, and is now working as an ethics officer at Victoria University. He intends to work in research in the future as well as practice clinical Psychology. He's interested in the psychology behind war and peace, and the interaction of politics and psychology.