



Peace News

**Newsletter of the *Psychologists for the Promotion of World Peace*
May, 2002**

We hope you have been eagerly awaiting this newsletter! It is hard to believe we are almost half way through another year and nine months away from the tragedy of September 11. As the world politicians continue ‘war on terrorism’, we are reminded that now, more than ever, we must make time for peace. On our own shores, we are being challenged to find a way to reconcile our treatment of refugees seeking asylum in our vast country. A sense of helplessness can prevail when we witness injustice politicized as righteous protection. In this light, we have devoted a good part of this newsletter to providing ideas for positive action. Also, in this edition, a summary of PPOWP’s activities for this last financial year, lots of upcoming activities of interest, and an introduction to a Victorian organization working for nonviolence in the family. We hope this newsletter provides you with some ideas for peace action and that, like all of us, you find some time for peace.

Report from National Convenor - Dr Susie Burke

As I compile PPOWP’s annual report, I am struck by the many and varied ways PPOWP members around Australia work for peace. Some of you apply your knowledge and skills in conflict resolution at home or at work to achieve fair and peaceful resolutions to problems. Some of you write letters to world leaders and sign petitions. Others give or attend lectures and talks on peace, conflict resolution, or social justice issues. Some of you participate in rallies and demonstrations to advocate peaceful alternatives to war and conflict. Some of you are very good at energising others to action, or good at making provocative and thought provoking comments at dinner parties! Others work away quietly, modelling the qualities of respect and compassion that are the cornerstone of peaceful methods of resolving conflict both at home and on the international scene. All of these contributions are valued greatly.

That said, there is always more that we can do. We are all volunteers in PPOWP, and finding time to work for peace and social justice can be challenging and sometimes feel overwhelming. A small group of people can’t do it all. We need your energy and initiative as well. If there is an issue that you are passionate about, or that you have special knowledge about, contact myself or your state convenors. If you have ideas for letters to newspaper editors, write them yourself, or let us know. Likewise, we are always welcoming of thought provoking articles for Peace News.

Last week I attended an excellent forum on the human rights and treatment of asylum seekers and refugees in Australia (see below for my summary of this forum). Lyn Bender, the APS psychologist who spoke, talked about how we feel hurt, desperate, sad, (and I would add guilty, ashamed, and overwhelmed) when we hear about the plight of these people and when we consider that much of our current treatment of them perpetuates the abuse of their human rights. As Lyn pointed out, these feelings are good because it means we’re getting it! Awareness and understanding are important steps towards being able to do something about injustice. In this edition of Peace News we have listed ideas for positive action to help the plight of refugees and asylum seekers.

At a national level, PPOWP has been busy working on ideas for a project officer position to develop peace education in the primary and secondary schools throughout Australia. The position would initially be for 1 day a week and involve promoting, marketing and developing existing PPOWP resources for educational purposes.

The aim is to expand the project to include additional program development. We hope to advertise this position soon.

PPOWP was pleased to offer a letter of support to Soka Gakkai International Australia's exhibition 'Peace, Hope and Harmony – Advancing Together', an exhibition of the art and poetry of children interned in Terezin ghetto in the then Czechoslovakia in World War II, along with artworks by the children of today at 21 Victorian schools. The exhibition ran from April 26 – May 12 at Manningham Gallery in Doncaster.

This month we accepted an invitation to affiliate with the Network for Youth Advancement and Peace Foundation in Ghana. We look forward to a fruitful exchange of ideas and information.

Suzanne Hicks has resigned from the position as WA PPOWP convenor and we thank her very much for her great effort in re-establishing the WA group and initiating interesting projects such as the Peace Forums. Suzanne has been an excellent conduit of information from various peace and social justice groups in Western Australia over the last few years. We welcome Manita Beskow as the new PPOWP convenor in Western Australia, and wish her well in the job!

For all APS members, please renew your PPOWP membership in the upcoming APS subscriptions. In order for you to remain a member of PPOWP you must explicitly indicate that on your subscription. A small (tax deductible) fee is charged by the APS that does go to PPOWP. It is very important to PPOWP to have a wide membership. For PPOWP members, please see the form at the end of the newsletter if you need to renew your subscription. To all members - we sincerely appreciate your willingness to support the group and the cause we stand for.

Summary of Group's activities 2001-2002

The following summary was included in the APS annual report:

State groups continue to meet regularly, with a resurgence in interest and energy following the events and aftermath of September 11. Members have been actively involved in receiving and disseminating information on peaceful alternatives to resolving conflict, and advocating respectful treatment of people from different ethnic backgrounds, including refugees.

The annual PPOWP Peace Research Award was administered and awarded in 2001 to two students, Jackie Bornstein from the University of Melbourne and Anne Matuszek of University of Tasmania. The Children's Peace Literature Award was presented to James Maloney for his novel *Touch Me*. A total of 20,000 copies of the German translation of PPOWP's bullying poster were distributed, and a reprint was approved. A set of our posters and a copy of the *Wise Ways to Win* book was sent to the library of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and to the Christian Children's Fund in East Timor. PPOWP gave permission to adapt *Wise Ways to Win* (children's book) for online delivery to the Bachelor of Education at James Cook University to remote Indigenous students.

An exciting new project for PPOWP this year will be the opportunity to support a Vietnamese psychologist, Mrs Thuy, for a three month training program at the Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne. Mrs Thuy is the only Psychologist working in the Psychiatry unit of the National Institute of Paediatrics in Hanoi. We hope this project will assist Mrs Thuy in forming professional contacts/peer support in Australia. PPOWP is also in the process of developing a project officer position to develop peace education in the primary and secondary schools throughout Australia.

Poster and book sales continue: *Rebuilding Relationships; Visions of Peace; Wise Ways to Win; Handling Anger Wisely; Bullying: Spotting it Stopping it; Creating Peaceful Families; Creating Cultures of Peace; Wise Ways to Win children's book*. See last page for order form.

Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Australia: Psychological Perspectives and Responsibilities

On 8th May, the *Women and Psychology* Interest group, together with the *College of Community Psychologists*, presented a forum looking at three aspects of the current situation for people seeking asylum in Australia. The three guest speakers were: Liz Curran, a community lawyer and activist, Lyn Bender, a psychologist recently returned from working in Woomera, and Fahim, a refugee from Afghanistan who spent 9 months in Woomera, and who is currently on a 3-year temporary protection visa. Ann Sanson, (former National Convenor of PPOWP) chaired the forum.

All three speakers gave evocative and moving accounts of the repeated trauma experienced by asylum seekers and refugees. This trauma begins with the persecution in their own countries, continues through the perilous journey to a 'safe haven' and the deprivation then encountered in detention centres, and culminates in the uncertainty and anxiety of only being granted a temporary protection visa.

Lyn Bender described the Woomera detention centre as one of the most destructive environments that she could ever imagine, and the refugees as the most disadvantaged people in Australia. Part of this, she said, is because of the traumatic past these people have had. What has driven them to Australia is what has traumatised them. They need a healing environment but instead, are kept in a desolate and shocking environment that exacerbates their trauma. Fahim and Lyn described many layers of abuse in the detention center at Woomera. The people are not given any information about the future, families are often separated, the officers can be rude, aggressive and disrespectful, and many people find it difficult to sleep because they are checked every 3 to 4 hours by the officers. There is a culture of absurdity in the way the legal processes are carried out, therefore great uncertainty and anxiety. The decision-making process to determine whether a person is a refugee or not seems obscure and bizarre. It is difficult for people to prove their refugee status if they are traumatised, confused, frightened, fearful of authority figures, or desperate.

More recently there have been token efforts to improve the living environment with some schooling, English classes, tv and air conditioning, but these are extremely limited and can be taken away at any time for no logical reason. It is an environment that Lyn said creates mental illness and retards the development of children. According to Fahim, the people are depressed, rejected, sad, hopeless, desperate and disappointed. Many people are suicidal, and self-harming behaviour is widespread. There is massive fear and anxiety about being returned to their countries, and also about their families back at home. There is little to divert the people's thoughts from these fears.

The final part of the forum looked at what people can do to help. Sensitization and awareness are the first steps. There is a ground swell of positive action happening already, and as momentum grows, so too will the pressure on politicians to make policies that respect the basic human rights of the refugees.

Here are some ideas for action:

- Educate yourself about the situation.
- Be informed (eg listen to radio national).
- Hear people's stories and spread these stories as a way of humanizing the refugees and dispelling myths about asylum seekers.
- Be a volunteer at a detention centre.
- Influence people you know.
- Be a volunteer at asylum seekers' resource centres.
- Join community groups to support refugees who come out of detention.
- Put pressure on politicians to change laws.
- Read the APS website's statement on child's rights
- Read the Women and Psychology statement of support to asylum seekers

And for some more ideas to make a difference...

- Donate cash, phone cards or travel cards for the Brigidine Nuns' support program. Or cheques can be made out to: 'Brigidine Asylum Seekers' and mailed to c/- Sr. Brigid Arthur, Kilbride Centre, 52 Beaconsfield Pde, Albert Park 3206.
- Donate money, food and (OK) clothes to: The Asylum Seekers Resource Centre, 207 and 211 Nicholson St. Footscray, 3011. Tel: 9687 2134. 9689 5075. Email: asrc@start.com
- Write letters to detainees telling them you welcome them to this country and that we are working to change our Government's policies. Email help@spareroomsforrefugees.com to get advice on how to go about this plus addresses of detainees who'd be delighted to receive messages of support from beyond the razor wire.
- If you want to get more directly involved, you can join an organisation. There is no shortage of options! *The Asylum Seekers' Resource Centre* (see above) is the local one. Others include: *Refugee Council* www.refugeecouncil.org.au Amongst other things, the page contains info and discussion about 'Alternatives to (mandatory) Detention' *Australians for Just Refugee Programs* www.refugeeprograms.com.au
Catholic Commission for Justice, Development and Peace Director: Marc Purcell, www.melc.catholic.aust.com
Asylum Seeker Project, Hotham Mission, Contact: Grant Mitchell, 2 Elm St North Melbourne, Tel: 9326 8343 Email: asp@sub.net.au Web site: www.vic.uca.org.au/linkup
The Victorian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Coalition virwc@ywca.net Tel: 9328 5611
Community Aid Abroad/Oxfam www.caa.org.au/
Ecumenical Migration Centre 9416 0044
Victorian Foundation for the Survivors of Trauma and Torture, Parkville: www.atmhn.unimelb.edu.au/organisations/national_bodies/foundation.html
- Take a few minutes to 'sign' the various online petitions and surveys, eg: 'Call for a Royal Commission into the Australian Government's Treatment of Asylum Seekers' : <http://www.PetitionOnline.com/ausrefug/> 'Do you support using detention centres as they now exist to deter asylum seekers?' www.probonoaustralia.com.au
- Write short letters to newspapers that publish negative, prejudicial comments or letters about 'illegals' or 'potential terrorists'. Write immediately and concisely: 2-3 paras is plenty! Don't worry if they're not published. Even 'hard-line' newspapers like the *Herald-Sun* can change editorial policy in the face of overwhelming public opposition to their 'line'.
- Find out what's being done about posting bonds and finding accommodation for refugees: www.SpareRoomsForRefugees.com
- Write to politicians until your hands drop off. Don't be abusive: write with respect, but write from the heart!
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Simon Crean Leader of the Opposition S.Crean.MP@aph.gov.au
Senator Stephen Conroy Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate: Senator.conroy@aph.gov.au
The Hon. John Howard MP Prime Minister Parliament House, Canberra, 2600
Jenny Macklin Deputy Leader of the Opposition Jenny.Macklin.MP@aph.gov.au
The ALPs website feedback form: <http://www.alp.org.au/action/feedback.html>

APS Position Paper On Child Detainees

A position paper has been written by an APS working group examining the psychological implications of detaining child refugees. This paper will be presented to the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. The following is a brief summary. Details may be found on the APS website.

The paper concludes that relevant psychological theory and research indicates that detention is a negative socialization experience, accentuates developmental risks, threatens the bonds between children and significant caregivers, limits educational opportunities, has traumatic effects and limits potential recovery from trauma, and is in some ways worse than imprisonment.

In the absence of any indication from the Australian government that it intends to alter the practice of holding children in detention centers, the position adopted is that facilitation of short-term and long-term psychological development and well-being of children is the basic tenet upon which detention centers should be audited and judged.

Introducing No to Violence

No To Violence, the Male Family Violence Prevention Association in Victoria, traces its formation back to the late 1980s when it began as an informal network of predominantly psychologists and social workers who were working with men who had used violence toward their partners and family members. Initially called Vicnet, later V-NET, now No To Violence, the organisation serves as the Victorian statewide peak body of organisations and individuals working with men to end their violence and abuse against family members.

NTV members come from a wide range of professional and community backgrounds and work in a range of settings including government and community-based settings as well as private practice. Activities of members include providing male family violence men's behaviour change programs, counselling services to men and their families, as well as educational activities within the broader community directed at preventing male family violence.

Organisational members of NTV include community health services, child and family services, counselling services, relationship services, correctional services, family violence services as well as family violence policy units. Individual NTV members include Social Workers, Psychologists, Family Therapists, Counsellors, Teachers, Welfare Workers, Correctional Officers, Family Violence Policy Officers as well as concerned members of the community

In working to prevent male family violence, NTV resources practitioners through:

Training and Professional Development Services

- Offering a male family violence specialised accredited training program, the Graduate Certificate in Social Science (Male Family Violence), developed in partnership with Swinburne University of Technology. The Graduate Certificate has both a male family violence men's behaviour change group facilitator training stream as well as a male family violence telephone counsellor training stream.
- Providing Professional Development Seminars each quarter for those working with men using violence toward family members, with a particular focus on issues for providers of men's behaviour change programs.
- Half-day and full-day training seminars for the sector on working with men who use violence towards their family.

Service and Educational Resources

- ‘*Stopping Men’s Violence In The Family: A Manual for Running Men’s Groups, Volume 1, Context and Standards*’, a 128 page standards manual for the operation of men’s behaviour change programs. Endorsed by the Victorian Government Department of Human Services, the manual includes guidelines covering 35 major practice areas.
- ‘*Mirrors, Windows and Doors: A Self-Help Book for Men About Violence and Abuse in the Home*’, a 116 page A5-size book which speaks directly to the experiences of men and both challenges and supports them to take responsibility for the use of violence.
- *NTV FORUM*, a quarterly journal which explores the range of diverse issues relating to male family violence work in Australia. *NTV FORUM* is the only journal of its kind in Australia.
- NTV website (www.ntv.net.au) containing a range of information on NTV activities and male family violence issues.
- A range of brochures encouraging men to take responsibility for their use of violence and seek assistance (both general and in relation to the impact of men’s violence on their children). Multiple copies of these brochures are available at no charge.

Policy Development and Sector Advocacy

- NTV plays a key role in articulating and promoting the views and concerns of the sector in developing responses to male family violence. NTV has been represented on a number of Victorian and Commonwealth committees dealing with male family violence.

The Men’s Referral Service

- NTV provides a statewide male family violence telephone counselling, information and referral service – the Men's Referral Service. The Men's Referral Service operates as the central point of contact for men in Victoria who are making their first moves towards taking responsibility for their violent and abusive behaviour. The service also receives calls from women seeking assistance on behalf of their partners, male family members or friends, as well as from agencies seeking assistance for their male clients. The Men's Referral Service responds to over 3,000 calls per year.

For more information on this organization, contact them on Ph: (03) 9428 3536 or email ntv@ntv.net.au.

Conference

The PPOWP Conference has been postponed to 2003 to coincide with the University of Melbourne “Flagship” Conference which is being hosted by the ICRC on a peace/conflict resolution theme. Information on the ICRC conference is available via the University of Melbourne website. It promises to be an exciting and expansive Conference with many International and local speakers. PPOWP will still be represented at the APS Conference in QLD, so keep posted for more details.

What's On

Here are some activities that may be of interest to Psychologists in Victoria. We would like to expand this column to include activities in all states, so please submit upcoming activities to the editors of Peace News.

May 25-26

Culture of Peace News Network

Internet based sharing of peace news, actions, education

Contact cpnn@psych.unimelb.edu.au

Conflict studies group meetings

Held every Tuesday lunchtime at Melbourne University

Contact stuart.wilkinson@unimelb.edu.au

May 30th

Invitational Work with men who use violence

Speaker- Alan Jenkins

Contact 9471 0108

June 4th

Towards an integrated response to Domestic Violence:

Speakers are Christine Nixon, Bernie Marshall, Sevgi Kilic, Sue Hamilton.

Contact DVIRC 9486 9866

Posters

As you all know PPOWP has put out calendars each year. These calendars are now for sale in poster format. (There is no calendar version for 2002.) They are informative, well designed and make attractive wall hangings for home or office. PPOWP are also always looking for people to sell posters at conferences. Our administrator, Tamsin, has put together a kit that makes the process of selling them very easy! To buy posters or to help sell them, please contact Tamsin Whaley on (03)5472 1113.

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PPOWP Contacts:

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Newsletter: Karen Weiss or Michael Green: michael@unimelb.edu.au.

The new PPOWP Web site has been launched and we hope members and other interested viewers enjoy the site and make use of the order form for purchasing PPOWP resources. The web site can be accessed through the APS web site at <http://www.psychsociety.com.au>

Renewing membership and changing contact details. If you suspect you may not have renewed your PPOWP membership for some time, please fill out the form below and send it with your fees as listed.

Our Administrator is very grateful for notification of changes of postal address and email address. Please contact her as per details on page 7.

*I wish to commence / renew membership of Psychologists for the Promotion of World Peace.

I am a member of APS (Please enclose cheque for \$12.50 payable to APS)

I am a student member of APS (Please enclose cheque for \$5.50 payable to APS)

I am not a member of APS (Please enclose cheque for \$22.00 payable to PPOWP).

Name: _____ Address: _____

Phone: a/h – b/h: _____ Email: _____

Please email the PPOWP administrator at tnt@gcom.net if you would prefer to receive your newsletters by email.

APS members please send your cheque and form to APS, P.O. Box 38 Flinders Lane PO, Melbourne Vic 8009.
Non-APS members please send your cheque and form to PPOWP, P.O. Box 38, Flinders Lane PO, Melbourne VIC 8009.
