



UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION
OF AUSTRALIA (WA DIVISION)

A People's Movement for the United Nations

May 2010 Update – Vol 2, No 5

News Flash!!

Visit us online at www.unaa-wa.org.au and keep abreast of our activities throughout 2010!

I write this at a time of anxiety for many refugees. The Australian Government has changed the rules concerning the processing of refugees and boat people from Sri Lanka and Afghanistan. The opposition has foreshadowed changes to visa requirements if it is elected to government. It seems that the long term work of many to improve the lot of refugees seeking safety in our country has been lost for political gain. I urge all members to monitor the situation carefully. The situation in Burma is again expected to deteriorate with the forth coming elections.

Sorry Day will be marked later this month. It is a time for us all to reflect on injustices. There is a move to have a National Indigenous Day to replace Sorry Day. This would be a time to celebrate the achievements and the culture of the indigenous people.

The National Conference 2011 Planning Committee has been working hard. It has been decided that the venue for the conference will be the Metro Hotel, Como. The hotel has made a generous offer regarding accommodation for those who wish to stay on site. It has been agreed that a conference package will be arranged including venue, early morning coffee, morning and afternoon tea and lunch. The Gala dinner will be held at the Metro with a Western Australian menu. The theme of the conference is the Millennium Development Goals and progress towards their achievement in 2015. The committee is now busy inviting guest speakers.

I have been pleased to welcome new volunteers this month.

Fund raising continues with a cake less cake stall and planning for a sausage sizzle at Bunnings Midland in July.

The association will greatly miss the work of Dr Rob Hewson, convenor of the Environment Committee who is moving interstate. On behalf of all the members I wish you well Rob.

Judith A. Parker President AM DSJ

UN International Days for June

June 5 World Environment Day

June 14 World Blood Donor Day

June 20 World Refugee Day

UNAA (WA) Human Rights Committee

The next meeting of the Human Rights Committee will be held on Friday May 28th at 12-1.15 UNAAWA Office Claisebrook Lotteries House. The committee is working on a fact sheet of the use of Tazar Guns in WA. This should be available in approx 2 months.

Two members of the committee attended a meeting of various groups working on human rights issues. The meeting was organised by Amnesty International. It was agreed that the groups would endeavour to work in partnership to arrange events and that a calendar of events would be established and maintained.

UNAA(WA) Environment committee activities

On May 12th, Henk Stappenbelt and Caroline Pembroke visited Bridgetown High School on the invitation of the sustainability and environment teacher, Stuart Ashbil, to speak about the International Year of Biodiversity, and the use of creative talents in working for the health of Planet Earth. We had a second engagement with the creative writing students, which was also interesting and a challenge in its own way, once the boys had stopped falling off desks and been rounded up from various parts of the school grounds. Stuart has a wonderful group of about 8 girls and six boys in year 9, who have a big interest in the endangered species for which the south west of WA is sadly becoming infamous. This region is one of the 6 UNEP acknowledged Biodiversity Hot Spots, home to significant plant and animal species found no-where else in the world.

We have a mutual friend in Dr Adrian Wayne of the DEC Woylie Rescue program in the Manjimup Region. There was plenty to share with the students, who, as we had 12 months ago, allowed themselves to crawl out of a warm bed on a cold morning in the forest, trapping, measuring and recording data of wildlife caught. It was interesting that Henk and I had helped trap maybe 15 woylies, all told, but this crew recorded only two. However, it was in a different part of the forest.

We spoke of the UN and the work of the various divisions, especially those which had some relevance for the students. They were quite struck by the UN peace process in conflict areas, which as we all know is to secure the area and the first priority is the safety of the children. This seemed to bring home far more immediately to them, the idea of a world body which has the power to help the children in stricken areas. We spoke of UNEP and the need to use everything available to us to help the balance of nature and the survival of the wild. The students have a great feeling for the animals, and for the protection and creation of habitat, as a necessary part of that.

Then we turned to the use of creative gifts to bring awareness and help to the endangered animals of the earth, citing activities such as Aleisha's series of TV programs on Extinction, and Caroline and Henk's Song For Planet Earth. We finished both of the sessions with a PowerPoint presentation that reflected on the work completed so far on "Wyle Woylie, Wildlife Hero."

Rob Hewson – Environment Committee Convenor

Upcoming Events

Presentation and Panel Discussion on *Implications for WA Biodiversity of Population*

Growth: 2pm to 4pm Saturday 22nd May 2010

This day is the [International Day for Biological Diversity](#) and 2010 is the [International Year of Biodiversity](#).

The event is organised by UNAA(WA) and [Sustainable Population Australia](#).

The principal speaker will be [Professor Pierre Horwitz](#).

Refreshments will be provided. A gold coin donation is requested.

Venue Seminar Room, City West Lotteries House, 2 Delhi Street, West Perth

Book Club: 11am Tuesday 8th June 2010

The book for discussion is [Stones into Schools: Promoting Peace with Books, Not Bombs, in Afghanistan and Pakistan](#) by Greg Mortenson.

All welcome. Bring a plate of food to share for lunch after the discussion.

Further information Ring Harvey Davies on 9387-6789.

Venue Room 3, City West Lotteries House, 2 Delhi Street, West Perth. Enquiries at Conservation Council Reception.

2010 is not only the International Year of Biodiversity, it is the UNAA-WA Year of Saying Goodbye to Rob Hewson, our popular Environment Convenor.

A sad occasion, but Rob leaves us with a great record of good things undertaken in the community, on behalf of UNAA-WA, and in the long term, on behalf of Planet Earth. It is his intention to return in early June to Victoria, where we hope he will once again join the UNAA, and so still be a part of the family, though a bit further away than Subiaco.

It was the Year 2004, and a small group of people sat together in the UNAA-WA small meeting room, to contemplate the possible future of the Environment Subcommittee. Led by the then secretary Lindsay Dorman, the group comprised Henk Stappenbelt, Rob Hewson, Caroline Pembroke and a young lawyer, who with her husband, came for a few meetings. It was a time of change for our Association, and the group was moving from 6 sub-committees [children, women, refugees, health, human rights and environment] to two, Human Rights and Environment.

Six years later, Caroline Pembroke and Rob Hewson have both been Convenors, [the only one escaping being Henk Stappenbelt]. Though there have been many changes of supporting Committee members, these three can claim to be foundation members of the 'new' Environment group. It is surprisingly stable in many ways. Not long after, we were joined by Manita Beskow and then three members of the Caruso Family, Joseph, Carolyn and Aleisha-Marie and then Leslie and Bernie Keen. Surender Mann, Sandeep Sharma, Harvey Davies and Scott Lambert have added themselves to our Committee more recently. We have all been together for quite a few years now. It's been a terrific time, with Rob just completing his three year Convenorship and membership of the Executive Committee, this June.

The very first public event which we undertook was a photographic exhibition at the State Library, for the International Year of Oceans. For this Rob can take the responsibility, since we were all looking round for something to do for our first World Environment Day, as a new Committee, and Rob said, 'lets have a photographic exhibition'. The idea quickly took hold and we held a good opening with Denis Beros for the Marine Environment, and Caris Bailey from Landscape, as speakers. The exhibition ran over 2 weeks, thanks to the generosity of the State Librarian, so it was a big undertaking for a new committee, however seems like we learned a great deal about working together to get the best out of our opportunity.

Rob has since been involved in our annual tree planting, as a real hands-on man; has organised us into another photographic exhibition with the City of Subiaco, and has instigated and run several high quality seminars on big environmental issues, with excellent speakers. Carbon Credit, Alternative Energies, and Biodiversity in WA in partnership with Sustainable Population Australia, being among the topics covered. Rob has shown himself to be a skilful MC on occasion, particularly where it's necessary to know one's scientific subject. It has been enormously to our benefit to have a Convenor with the requisite scientific background, and thanks Rob for being that person.

Then there is fundraising, with Rob pitching in gallantly to assist with quiz nights, bonfires and other activities; running of the UNAA-WA information stall at relevant public meetings, such as the Walk Against Warming, earlier this year. In addition, Rob has attended seminars and talks as our representative, and was also our delegate to the Conservation Council. It all comes together to show what an excellent and involved Convenor we have had in Rob Hewson.

Our deepest thanks and warmest good wishes go with you, Rob. All the very best for your new life in Victoria.

Further Resources

- **Subscribe to UNity for 2009, as well as earlier issues are available at: www.unaa.org.au**
- **For international updates, sign up for UN Wire: http://www.smartbrief.com/un_wire/index.jsp**
- **Read more about the Millenium project: www.unmillenniumproject.org**

www.unaa-wa.org.au

33 Moore St, East Perth, 6004 Western Australia, AUSTRALIA

Ph: (+61 8) 9221 9455 Fax: (+61 8) 9325 7061 Email: unaawa@tpg.com.au



From the Desk of the UNAA WA Ambassador

25 April 2010

Dear Madam President and Members,

It is an honour and a privilege to report from the Anzac Services in Villiers-Bretonneux on French soil where over 50,000 of our young Australian troops lost their lives.

The Background (from the War Archives)

Every year, Australians make the journey to the Gallipoli Peninsula Western Front to attend the ANZAC Day Dawn Service at ANZAC Cove. Every year, all around Australia, many of us set out alarms and attend Dawn Services at our local RSL Club memorial.

In WW1, after the 8 months campaign at Gallipoli, Australian Troops entered the trenches of France and Belgium. Three years later over 52,000 were dead. IN 1918, on 24/15 April, Australian Troops recaptured the Village of Villiers-Bretonneux and forced a German withdrawal. The significance of this battle was not lost on our Allies. The troops who retook Villiers, were part of the 5 Australian Divisions urgently brought by rail from Belgium to prevent a German breakthrough. The German Armies had been reinforced by troops from the Russian Front. Russia had withdrawn from the war.

The German High Command had determined that if they could capture Amiens, the major city in the Somme, then drive to the coast, they would split the Allied Forces. They saw this as an opportunity to finish the war in their favour. Australian and British troops halted the German advance, and on 24/25 April, 1918, Australian troops recaptured Villiers-Bretonneux and forced a German withdrawal.

It is significant that in spite of the fierce fighting that Australians faced at places such as Pozieres, Bullecourt, Mont St Quentin, Le Hamel and countless other sites, the major Australian Memorial is at Villiers-Bretonneux. The size and solitude of the Memorial is overwhelming. Etched into the walls below the 32m high tower which dominates the area around for a great distance, are the names of over 11,000 Australian soldiers who have no known grave in France.

On 25 April 2010, it is the 92nd Anniversary of the Battle of Amiens, as it is known to the locals in The Somme. There are museums in Villiers-Bretonneux Bullecourt and Peronne that are dedicated to the diggers of WW1. The Victoria School in Villiers-Bretonneux carries the sign in English "Do Not Forget Australia".

The United Nations (UN) was formed in the wake of World War II as a forum for international debate and co-operation in responding to the global crises that faced humanity at the time. Over the years, it has helped prevent, as well as end wars and other international crises, it is the main organ of co-operation between nations, the conciliator of differences and principal instrument for promoting and safeguarding the peace of the world.

It is a time that we should reflect on the liberty that as Australians we share, that allows the lifestyle that is taken for granted.

On behalf of UNAA(WA) it has been an honour to represent our Organisation on foreign fields.

Yours sincerely
JOSEPH A. CARUSO
UNAA(WA) Ambassador
at
Villiers-Bretonneux
