



United Nations Association of Australia  
WA Division

NOV/DEC 2012

# UNAAWA Newsletter



## Seasons Greetings!

### Inside this issue:

UN Day	2
Commemoration in Memory of Victims of Holocaust	4
Remembrance Day 11/11	5
Human Rights Day	6
- IWD Breakfast - UN Dates	8
World Pneumonia Day	9
World Science Day	10



[Photo: Executive members showing 'what the UN means to us' for the UN Day DVD]

You are invited to our 2013 Planning Day on **Saturday 19 January 2013** from 10am - 2pm at the Office at which we will celebrate our 2012 achievements, consider our priorities and plan activities. Already 2013 is shaping up to be a busy year and any involvement you wish to have is always appreciated. If you would like to come to our Planning Day, please let the Office know and bring along some food to share.

Are you interested in issues such as climate change, the 'green economy', biodiversity and conservation? We are looking for some additional members to help us raise awareness about the UN's position and how to make a difference in the areas of the environment and sustainability. If you would like to be part of this Committee or would like information, please contact me on [wapresident@unaa.org.au](mailto:wapresident@unaa.org.au) or 0417 459 978.

On 19 January (after the Planning Day!) I will be travelling to Geneva as the Australian representative at the World Federation of United Nations Associations' *Civil Society in Action for Human Rights* program. Held at the Palais des Nations, the program aims to help us know more about contributing to existing UN human rights mechanisms and lobbying Permanent Missions to the UN about human rights issues. In addition, I will be liaising with the Australian Permanent Mission to the UN and helping to report on the 15th session of the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review. More information to follow.

On Tuesday 29 January, we are co-hosting the screening of the award winning and inspiring documentary 'Paper Clips' at the Jewish Community Centre in Yokine for the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust (details inside). All are welcome to attend.

Have a lovely and safe festive season and best wishes for a healthy and jolly 2013. Australia's seat on the UN Security Council will commence on New Years Day!  
*[Carolyn Gatward, President]*

## UN Day 2012

Celebrations began with scheduled viewings of the new DVD "Australia and the UN" (produced by the National Office for UN Day) on the large screens in the Perth Northbridge Piazza & also at the Perth Cultural Centre.

We distributed information and fliers in the Perth Cultural Centre through the lunchtime period. Judith Parker & Curtis Clark joined us after attending the Children's Week WA 2012 Award Ceremony. Greg Glossop from the Police Peace Keepers also added to the occasion with his blue beret & service medals for his time in East Timor.



*[Photo right: Greg, Curtis & Judith, UN Day DVD screening.]*

Our main event for UN Day was an evening function at the Constitutional Centre with a public lecture, "*The Lucky Country? Australia's role in the protection of refugees in our region*". The event consisted of a discussion on Australia's contribution in the area of humanitarian aid, specifically for refugee and asylum seeker processes, and how Australia is tracking under the 1951 Refugee Convention. We had around 100 people and, while enjoying light refreshments prior to the discussion, there was great opportunity for networking & catching up.

Jan Ryan paid tribute to Professor Tom Stannage who passed away in early October. Professor Stannage was well known for his prowess on the football field but more particularly also served at both UWA and Curtin University as an esteemed academic of history. He made a significant contribution to Western Australia with his published histories of Perth & WA, he helped to formulate ways for WA history to be simplified and taught in schools and as a history professor at UWA in 1997, he won the inaugural Prime Minister's Award for Australian University Teacher of the Year. In 1997, he became a Member of the Order of Australia for services to the study of history and museum development in Australia.

We received short introductions from Davina Hunter, Young UN Women; Kerry Stophor, UN Women and Julia Crandell, UN Youth about their respective organisations. Our first presentation was from Ms Carina Hoang, Special Representative for Australia for UNHCR, who gave a very powerful presentation of her experience leaving Vietnam as a refugee. She highlighted the magnitude of the exodus during the 1970s and 1980s to escape the bitter aftermath of a protracted civil war & the horror of being under the communist regime when it took over South Vietnam.



*(Photo L to R: Prof. Gillian Triggs, Neesha Seth, Carina Hoang, Carolyne Gatward)*

Ms Hoang spoke of her fellow countrymen leaving by boat - really the first 'boat people' risking their lives in overcrowded and less than stable vessels. She shared her personal anguish arising when families are split, along with the courage and loss of dignity needed to make these journeys with little knowledge of what may be waiting. She also highlighted the protracted journeys where there are often many temporary camps along the way. There is nothing straight forward even when decisions have been made.



Ms Hoang (addressing audience, photo left) has collected many stories and photographs from refugees and compiled a beautiful book, “Boat People, personal stories from the Vietnam exodus 1975-1996”, which she hopes will help people know more about these experiences.

It also gives her an opportunity to express gratitude to the people & countries such as Australia that have supported refugees.

Professor Gillian Triggs, President of the Australian Human Rights Commission, followed Carina and we were very grateful to her for flying over to Perth from the eastern States especially for our event.

She provided insight into the legal issues that evolve in refugee & asylum seeker processes & highlighted the requirements of meeting international obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention & meeting the individual needs of people who have experienced significant trauma before reaching our shores.

Professor Triggs (photo right) was also able to provide personal experience of her recent time on Christmas Island where her concerns were raised about issues such as overcrowding; prolonged detention; low standards of accommodation and inadequate recreation facilities. She is now committed to urge the government to act urgently to improve the situation. She did acknowledge that numbers can fluctuate on the island and that we currently face considerable challenges, however it seems questionable as to whether our obligations under the Refugee Convention are being met.



She also made reference to other offshore processing of asylum seekers, referring to our human rights obligations and also the obligation of international law which binds us to caring for those we send to another country—and whether we have effective control of arrangements in Nauru & Manus Island & how these obligations can be exercised in third country processing arrangements. It appears that she has concerns about how Australia manages asylum seekers and in conclusion she ended that she felt we could do better.



Following the presentations, Associate Professor Mary Anne Kenny, Director of the Centre for Human Rights Education, facilitated a Q & A session.

Many questions were raised by the audience which provided food for thought, including those regarding the progress being made in relationship to the legal & humanitarian issues surrounding our refugees and asylum seekers.

Approximately \$1,500 was raised for the UN-HCR. UNAAWA gratefully acknowledges the support of AusAID for this event.

Special thanks are expressed to the volunteers from UN Youth who did a wonderful job serving our refreshments & ensuring our guests were well cared for.

*(Ailsa Allen, UNAAWA member)*



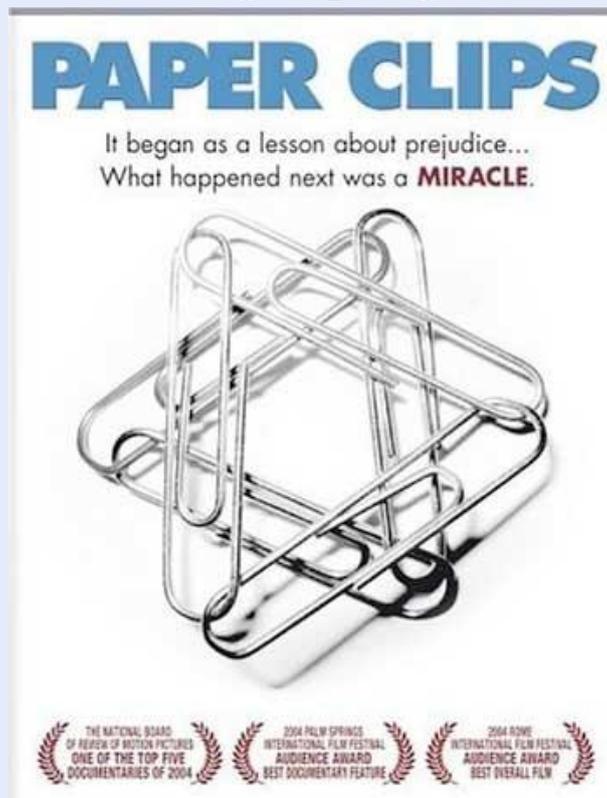
# International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust

Organised by the Holocaust Institute of WA, UNAA (WA), NCJWA (WA)  
and the Jewish Historical & Genealogical Society of WA

Tuesday 29 January 2012 at 10am for 10:30am start

## *“Paper Clips”*

*An award winning, inspiring documentary*



The Jewish Community Centre - 61 Woodrow Avenue, Yokine (*Upstairs*)

Also a display of books on the Holocaust

Light refreshments will be served

*Inquiries* NCJWA(WA) [wa@ncjwa.org.au](mailto:wa@ncjwa.org.au) or UNAA(WA) [office@unaa-wa.org.au](mailto:office@unaa-wa.org.au)

## 11/11 Remembrance Day—'Lest We Forget'

In my usual capacity I have held the honour and continuing privilege of representing UNAAWA at the Kings Park War Memorial Remembrance Day Service for a number of years.

Each year friendships grow older warmer and closer, I see familiar faces from State, public and civilian offices, and I re-visit my teenage youth and question the loss of life, young lives, that held dreams, which this war took away from them. In the expressions of the aged faces of war veterans I can only glimpse distant visions of these previous war fields. How can we ever understand these horrific events, of 94 years passing?



On this sacred Remembrance Day and with the greatest respect, remember the men and women, military and civilians, that have died in the service of our country. No further could a more poignant address as given from the RSL State President Mr William Gaynor be fitting (reproduced below):

### REMEMBRANCE DAY ADDRESS 2012

*'At 11 o'clock on this day 94 years ago, the guns of war finally fell silent along the Western Front, and the killing and maiming of a generation of our young men ceased.*

*The tragedy of the Great European War of 1914-1918 for our nation and our people did not, however, end with the silence of the guns. So many young lives remained destroyed - un-lived and unfulfilled. So many dreams remained unrealised. The wounded still suffered. The bereaved still grieved or were yet to learn of their loss. Across Australia, as in other parts of the world, ordinary people took stock of the carnage and resolved that the deaths, the suffering and the awful loss would not be in vain; that the Great War would be the war to end all wars; that they would always remember those who had died or suffered in the cause of peace.*

*And so, at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1919, the first anniversary of the Armistice, our nation stopped to remember. Throughout the land, in schools, in workplaces, on the street and in the homes, Australians stood still and observed two minutes silence. There was hardly a family that had not been touched by the Great War. Australia as a whole mourned for what had been lost and for what would never be.*

*Sadly, we now know that the Great War was not the war to end all wars. Within 20 years our servicemen and women again were called to fight, first in the cause of freedom and decency and then in desperate defence of our own land. Again we prayed that there would be no more war.*

*But then there was Korea ... then Malaya ... Borneo and Vietnam. There was conflict in the Gulf, Afghanistan, Iraq, East Timor and the Solomon Islands and, of course with United Nations peacekeeping operations. And still war goes on. Today, the Great War has become World War I and the 11<sup>th</sup> November has become Remembrance Day.*

*On this day, we, particularly our young who hold the future in their hands, must honour and renew the pledge to remember the sacrifices made by our service men and women on behalf of us and our nation. So it is Remembrance Day that is now a day on which Australia and Australians pause and remember the sacrifice of all those who have died or suffered in Australia's cause in any war or conflict in which Australia, as a nation, has been engaged.*

*And it is the day on which, in their memory and in their honour, we, as individuals and as a nation, renew our commitment to peace.'*

May we spare a moment for the efforts that all nations and the UN agencies energise in the endeavour to prevent conflict, and their undertaking in peacekeeping missions. If there was ever a time for peace, it is in this Millennium.

*[Joseph Caruso, UNAAWA Global Representative]*

## 10 December—International Human Rights Day

### *'Your Voice Counts'*

This year, the UN marked International Human Rights Day by highlighting how everyone has the right to freedom of expression and opinion, peaceful assembly and association and the chance to shape decisions that affect their lives and communities.

In his address for the UN Human Rights Day 2012, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, proclaimed “International law is clear, no matter whom you are, or where you live, your voice counts. On this day, let us unite to defend your right to make it heard”.

While many human rights defenders around the world are blatantly intimidated, threatened and persecuted, sometimes it is less deliberate: certain individuals or groups are simply not given opportunities to raise their voice, or use their brains and talents to achieve the successes of which they are capable. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay points out that many millions of people cannot even dream of a good future, they just dream of getting by day by day.

They may have none of the basic rights and services that would give them the ability to build a better future. It could be because they are specifically excluded from seizing opportunities by discriminatory laws or practices - or because, through no fault of their own, they are stateless, citizens of nowhere. It may be that their leaders just want to be in power, no matter what happens to the citizens they govern.

The UN's General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) on 10 December 1948 and the date has since served to mark Human Rights Day worldwide. The Declaration consists of a preamble and 30 articles, setting out a broad range of fundamental human rights and freedoms to which all men and women everywhere in the world are entitled, without any distinction. The Declaration has been translated into more than 380 languages and dialects; from Abkhaz to Zulu – making it not only the most translated document but the most ‘universal’ one in the world.

Australian scholar, lawyer and High Court judge, Dr Herbert Vere Evatt was a significant contributor to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and also the one who led the Australian Delegation at the meeting that founded the United Nations in San Francisco in 1945.

Representing voices from other small nations around the world, Dr Evatt directed his attention to the Great Powers and highlighted the importance of mutual and universal respect. This contribution helped develop the Charter of United Nations to become more humane and larger in scope, containing provisions for the poor, the weak and the oppressed.

Dr Evatt was elected President of the UN General Assembly in 1948 and he proclaimed the UDHR *'the cornerstone of human rights protection throughout the modern world'*.



[UN Photo/ McLain.  
Dr Evatt signs UN Charter 26 June 1945]

UNAAWA and the Young Lawyers Committee of the Law Society of WA celebrated Human Rights Day 2012 with an event at the Cygnet Cinema in South Perth. The event involved a speech about mental health in WA by Ms Sandra Boulter, Principal Solicitor and General Manager of the Mental Health Law Centre, followed by the screening of the Australian film 'Mental'.

Ms Gatward introduced Ms Boulter who is trained as (and has worked as) a general nurse, midwife and intensive care nurse. She is a mother of five and is qualified as a barrister and solicitor. Prior to specialising in mental health law, Sandra worked for four years with remote Aboriginal communities with the award winning Kununurra based Kimberley Toad Busters on the cane toad campaign.



[Photo: Hannah Milligan (YLC), Sandra Boulter, Carolyne Gatward]

Members and guests attended the event to hear Sandra talk about issues such as justice, fairness, suicide rates, the way officials treat people with a mental illness in WA and the lack of facilities to treat patients. Sandra highlighted the problematic process of sentencing/making custody orders that can emerge if a person 'admits' to being of unsound mind when committing an offence.



[Photo: attendees at the Human Rights Day film event]

Ms Milligan of the Young Lawyer's Committee thanked Sandra for her excellent overview of these important and topical issues.

The WA Government has released a revised Mental Health Bill as a Green Bill for public comment. Over 1,200 written submissions were received on the previous Bill. The current Bill is intended to repeal the existing *Mental Health Act 1996*.

(Mai Tran, UNAAWA Intern, Dec 2012)

References:

1. <http://www.un.org/en/events/humanrightsday/index.shtml>
2. <http://www.un.org/en/events/humanrightsday/2012/about.shtml>
3. <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43722&Cr=human+rights&Cr1=#.UMmBPW9199g>
4. <http://evatt.org.au/about-us/doc-evatt.html>
5. Plain English Guide to Criminal Law, Mental Illness & Mental Impairment in WA, June 2012

## International Women's Day Breakfast 2013

UNAAWA is booking a table at the International Women's Day Breakfast 2013. The event is being held on **Thursday 7 March 2013** from 7am to 9am at the Perth Convention & Exhibition Centre.

Last year, over \$50,000 was raised for UN Women projects to help create safe marketplaces for women in the Pacific. In 2013, all funds raised will go to the UN Women Critical Services Initiative to strengthen immediate response facilities for women experiencing violence around the world.

Tickets are \$65. If you would like to attend, please contact the Office on 6380 7304 or email [office@unaa-wa.org.au](mailto:office@unaa-wa.org.au). We will then make sure a seat is reserved for you as tickets will sell out for this popular function.

## United Nations - Important Dates

### November

**10th—World Science Day for Peace & Development [UNESCO]**

**12th-World Pneumonia Day [WHO]**

**14th-World Diabetes Day [WHO]**

**17th-World Day of Remembrance of Road Traffic Victims [WHO]**

**20th-Universal Children's Day**

**25th-International Day for Elimination of Violence against Women**

### December

**1st-World AIDS Day**

**2nd-International Day for Abolition of Slavery**

**3rd-International Day of Persons with Disabilities**

**9th-International Anti-Corruption Day**

**10th-Human Rights Day**

**18th-International Migrants Day**

**20th-International Human Solidarity Day**

### January

**27th-International Day of Commemoration in Memory of Victims of the Holocaust**



For more information, visit

<http://www.un.org/en/events/observances/days.shtml>



## 12 November—World Pneumonia Day

World Pneumonia Day seeks to raise awareness of pneumonia as a public health issue and help prevent the millions of avoidable child deaths from pneumonia that occur each year. It is organized by the Global Coalition against Child Pneumonia (including UN agencies) to bring much-needed attention among donors, policy makers, health care professionals and the general public to the issue of pneumonia.

So what exactly is pneumonia and why does it have such a devastating and deadly effect especially on vulnerable and developing countries? Pneumonia is a form of acute respiratory infection that affects the lungs. The lungs are made up of small sacs called alveoli, which fill with air when a healthy person breathes. When an individual has pneumonia, the alveoli are filled with pus and fluid, which makes breathing painful and limits oxygen intake.

Pneumonia is the single largest cause of death in children worldwide. Every year, it kills an estimated 1.4 million children under the age of five years, accounting for 18% of all deaths of children under five years old globally (2011). Pneumonia affects children and families everywhere, but is most prevalent in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa where the children's immune system is compromised due to malnutrition or lack of basic care.

However, pneumonia is easily treatable through the use of antibiotics. These are usually prescribed at a health centre or hospital, but the vast majority of cases of childhood pneumonia can be administered and managed effectively within the home. Hospitalization is recommended in infants aged two months and younger and also in very severe cases.

The UN, with the help of other organisations, is helping to fight back against the tide of pneumonia cases, particularly in the most vulnerable parts of the world. In 2009, WHO and UNICEF launched the *Global action plan for the prevention and control of pneumonia* (GAPP). The aim is to accelerate pneumonia control with a combination of interventions to protect, prevent and treat pneumonia in children with actions to:

- **Protect** children from pneumonia include promoting exclusive breastfeeding and hand washing, and reducing indoor air pollution;
- **Prevent** pneumonia with vaccinations;
- **Treat** pneumonia, by focussing on making sure that every sick child has access to the right kind of care -- either from a community-based health worker, or in a health facility if the disease is severe -- and that they can get the antibiotics and oxygen they need to get well.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon says that while there has been great progress, we must scale-up proven solutions and ensure every child in need is helped. So the next question is what can we as individuals do to help out in the fight against pneumonia? Tell your friends, family and colleagues about the battle against pneumonia by joining the social media campaigns e.g. share information via Facebook and Twitter. For example, it is estimated that 1.56 million lives can be saved in five years by increasing antibiotics that cost about 30 cents per dose.

There are many resources on the World Pneumonia Day website, where you can read Coalition partner materials and be a part of the campaigns organized around efforts to help save the lives of millions of children. There are numerous ways to help out but at the end of the day, education is critical. Education is the best step to hopefully one day achieving zero deaths caused by pneumonia.

*(Max Fouda, UNAAWA member)*

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs331/en/index.html>; <http://worldpneumoniaday.org/>.

# World Science Day for Peace & Development (WSDPD)

The World Science Day for Peace and Development is a day that is intended to renew the national, as well as the international commitment, to science for peace and development. This day can be used as an educational tool to stress the responsible use of science for the benefit of society. This day is celebrated on the 10<sup>th</sup> November every year.<sup>(1)</sup> It was recommended at the World Conference on Science in Budapest in 1999 that recognition was required for a new compact between science and society.



‘Science is our best asset for supporting inclusive and equitable development, and for building global sustainability at a time of uncertainty, and faced with biophysical limits of the planet,’ says UNESCO’s Director-General, Irina Bokova. ‘We must also place science at the service of all, while observing the fundamental rights of the individual,’ she adds. ‘Above all, we must open a new chapter in scientific integration.’

Following the World Conference on Science, UNESCO established the WSDPD through a proclamation at a general conference in 2001. The WSDPD was to serve as a reminder of the organization’s mandate and commitment to science. The day was first celebrated in 2002 and has been held annually since then.<sup>(2)</sup>

These days society is bombarded by information showing the destructive side of science in society, examples of these being in war torn countries. The beauty of the WSDPD is that it highlights the constructive and peaceful purposes of science and its benefits to not only humans but the planet itself. Unfortunately these constructive and peaceful sciences are rarely mentioned in the media and the WSDPD aims to correct this.

The world has come a long way since the industrial revolution but the question is whether the world has done it responsibly? While we have made impressive technological gains in medicine, sustainable development and education, more needs to be done to counteract the harmful use of sciences, in particular military and technological applications that damage the environment.

What can WE as individuals do to help the cause? Some examples are:

- Talking to your local government to find out what they are planning for sustainable development and how new technology can create a ‘greener’ local area;
- Encouraging scientists to promote knowledge of constructive advancements in science;
- Incorporating the messages of WSDPD into official speeches, publications and activities;
- Writing articles and letters about the importance of science for sustainable societies to the media, industry trade journals, organisation newsletters, etc.<sup>(3)</sup>

*(Max Fouda, UNAANA member)*

## References

(1) [www.unesco.org/science/wsd\\_about.shtml](http://www.unesco.org/science/wsd_about.shtml)

(2) <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/un/world-science-day>

(3) [www.unesco.org/science/wsd\\_about.shtml](http://www.unesco.org/science/wsd_about.shtml)

## Further Resources

- **The United Nations Information Centre for Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific:** <http://www.un.org.au>
- **The United Nations Youth Association Australia (UNYA) WA Division:** <http://wa.unya.org.au/>
- **For international updates, sign up for UN Wire:** [http://www.smartbrief.com/un\\_wire/index.jsp](http://www.smartbrief.com/un_wire/index.jsp)
- **For national updates, sign up for the UNAA newsletter UNity:** <http://www.unaa.org.au/subscribe.html>