



United Nations Association of Australia WA Division

UN Matters

May 2014

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Carolyn Gatward

Congratulations to everyone involved in our Climate Change hypothetical (see p. 2-3) at the Irish Club, Subiaco. A fantastic night enjoyed by all. Please reserve the date of **Tuesday 29 July** (7pm) for our Quiz Night at the same venue (tables of 8). Our AGM will be held on **Sunday 17 August** at 2pm at the Office. Light refreshments will be available from 1.30pm. I encourage you to consider nominating for a position on the Executive Committee. If you would like to know more, come along and meet us at one of our next Executive Meetings - 5.30pm on 12 June and 10 July.

The UN Secretary General has recently announced that Peter Drennan of the Australian Federal Police has been appointed as the head of security for 145,000 UN staff along with their families. Congratulations to Mr Drennan, who will become the most senior Australian official at the UN.

There are over 110,000 peacekeepers from 122 countries serving in 16 missions around the world. On 29 May, the International Day of UN Peacekeepers recognised their efforts to help manage international peace and security. About \$8 billion per annum is spent on the UN peacekeepers, which is less than 0.5% of what the world allocates for military expenditure. The UN has just appointed its first-ever female force commander, Major General Kristin Lund (of Norway) to take over the military responsibilities of the UN mission in Cyprus.

In accordance with the UN Millennium Development Goals, Australia has an obligation to allocate foreign aid at a rate of 0.7% of gross national income by 2020. This commitment has looked shaky in recent years and is now looking impossible following the recent Federal Budget. Tim Costello (World Vision) observed that cuts to foreign aid made up 20% of the \$36 billion in Government savings, despite aid being just 1.3% of the total budget. With over a billion people in the world living in extreme poverty and 2 billion living on under \$2 a day, surely we can do better as a relatively wealthy nation.

A reminder that the National AGM and NSW State Conference will be held from 25-27 July. Check out the programme at <http://www.unaa.org.au/unaa-nsw-conference.html>.



Let the Office or myself know if you are interested in attending so we can meet up at the venue.

(Photo: RH and CG at Radio Fremantle.)

<http://www.unaa-wa.org.au>



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Perth 2050 Hypothetical	2
World Environment Day	3
Sri Lanka Photo Exhibition	4
Global Representative's Report.....	5
UNAANA Announcements	6
News -Other Organisations	6
UN Important Dates	6

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Perth 2050 Hypothetical event a big success
- Yolande Frank Memorial Award—submissions closing end of July
- UNAA Essay Competition — submissions closing mid June

PERTH 2050 CLIMATE CHANGE HYPOTHETICAL

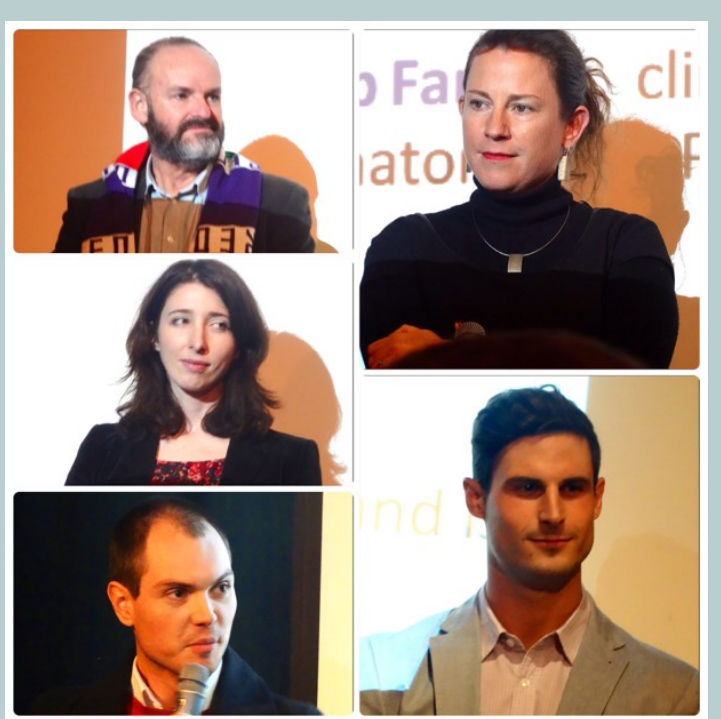
This month drew to a close on a high note with our fundraising event 'Perth 2050' successfully filling the hall at the Irish Club in Subiaco. The event was a hypothetical comedy debate in the style of Geoffrey Robertson's 1980's television series, which discussed social issues in a fictional context. Our very own hypothetical situation placed us in Perth in the year 2050 where we have run out of oil and the niceties of our lives in 2014 are the tales of lore.

The panel was composed of an exceptional group of individuals who share a common objective – to place sustainability at the centre of Perth's development in order to create a cleaner, greener future. One of the panellists, Professor Ray Wills is, among other things, the Managing Director and joint owner of Future Smart Strategies. He entertained the audience with various satirical accents as he assumed the persona of a number of characters throughout the evening. His quippy remarks helped highlight the often absurd nature of debates that ignore the effects of non-renewable energy sources on climate change and our planet.

Jemma Green is a Research Fellow and Doctoral Candidate at Curtin University. With a background in investment banking, Jemma coupled her knowledge of finance with her research into transport and renewable energy to emphasise the need for Perth to focus on public transport solutions that would lessen the reliance on cars and, consequently, our reliance on non-renewable energy.

Simon Blackwell is an Urban Designer at Taylor Burrell Barnet in Perth. Like Professor Wills, Blackwell mixed humor and irony to draw attention to the possible changing landscape of our urban centres, comically projecting the dereliction of skyscrapers as the lack of oil means lifts lack the power to access upper floors of tall buildings.

Peter Langlands, as well as being a Research Assistant at the University of Western Australia, is a major player in a movement called Transition Town Guildford, which focuses on cultivating a strongly connected community and a healthy environment at a local level. His character for the evening was a 2050 youngster [cont. p 5]



Panellists (clockwise from top left): Prof Ray Wills, Jaimie Yallup Farrant, Simon Blackwell, Peter Langlands, Jemma Green.



Ricardo Hernandez, Executive Member.

who had never experienced the commodities of the oil-rich society of 2014. Langlands playfully projected what it would be like for the youth in 2050 who only know a life of sustainable living, with strong social bonds and a thriving cycle-culture.

Jaime Yallup Farrant is a climate change activist, with a background in the dramatic arts. Well poised and articulate, Jaimie assumed a character not dissimilar to herself, and discussed an array of issues from immigration to climate change. All the while, Jaimie maintained that a better future will depend on a symbiosis of climate action and cultural leadership.

The evening was informative and fun. The raffle and limerick contest added an enjoyable touch. And, most importantly, the hopes for the future of Perth were overwhelmingly positive. Thanks go to Strictly Hypothetical for collaborating on the event and Elisa Williams for MC-ing. Special thanks to those who helped source the raffle prizes, to Carolyne for her dedicated effort in getting this event up and running and to Ricardo for his tireless efforts in promoting the event.

[Colleen Harmer, Executive Member]



'Full house' at the Irish Club, Subiaco

Photos by Kombe Musonda

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

World Environment Day (WED) is a United Nations initiative which encourages awareness and action about environmental issues. The initiative is also labelled as “the people’s day” and focuses on doing something positive for the environment. WED is held on 5 June each year. This year’s WED ties into the Small Islands Development theme and the overarching issue of climate change, the slogan being “raise your voice, not the sea level”. Over 100 countries participate in WED (United Nations Environment Program 2014).

WA has two finalists nominated for the WED award, Adrian Glamorgan and Elizabeth PO. Adrian and Elizabeth explore the dangers of uranium, which was presented in a series of informative and engaging radio segments on RTRFM 92.1 Perth. Adrian and Elizabeth travelled to Japan for six weeks to get a greater insight into the potential adverse impacts of uranium processing.

The series also discusses the impact of past nuclear bomb tests in Australia. It includes talks with Aboriginal elders who were affected by the nuclear weapons tests conducted by the British Army as well as the threats which are posed by existing and proposed uranium mines and waste dumps in Australia. You can listen to Elizabeth and Adrian’s set of radio segments at <http://rtrfm.com.au/shows/understorey/>. We wish them all the best with their nomination for the WED award on this important environmental issue. [cont. p 4]

It is important to note the relevance of uranium in the Climate Change debate and therefore to the WED theme this year. Fossil fuels are a significant contributor to climate change and the inevitable reality is that they won't be around forever. The world is looking for cheaper and greener alternative energies and as there is a common perception that energy produced from renewable is not cost effective, the debate about nuclear energy often arises.

Australia possesses around 31% of the world's uranium and since the global price of uranium has been rising since 2003, many proponents of nuclear power have advocated it as a possible solution to the Climate Change issue. This is due to the very high energy content of uranium isotopes and its negligible pollutant properties in comparison to fossil fuels. Australia currently mines and exports uranium and is part of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation treaty which aims to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons (Wikipedia 2014 a). Australia still however exports uranium to countries which are not a signatory to the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty.

Although there may be benefits in relation to energy production from uranium, it is important to highlight that reportedly there has been 99 accidents at nuclear power plants (Wikipedia 2014 b). These accidents have had varying degrees of adverse impact; however we have seen how devastating the more severe cases can be to both the natural environment and human populations. That brings us back to one of the key questions that Elizabeth and Adrian propose in their WED submission, which is whether Australians wishing to export uranium can rely on current international safeguards.

[Karissa Wilson, Executive Member]

References:

United Nations Environment Programme 2014. World Environment Day; <http://www.unep.org/wed/>

Wikipedia 2014 a) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_power_in_Australia

Wikipedia 2014 b) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_and_radiation_accidents_and_incidents.

SRI LANKAN GENOCIDE PHOTO EXHIBITION AND FORUM

The three- day “Sri Lankan Genocide 2009...” photo exhibition at Victoria Hall in Fremantle graphically highlighted the human rights abuses suffered by Tamil civilians in Sri Lanka. Organised by Action for Human Rights In Tamil Eelam and Sri Lanka, the photo exhibition and forum were designed to illicit support for a cause that has been largely overlooked by Australian leaders. The guest speakers included Prof. Raj Rajeswaran (Australian Tamil Congress chairperson), Melissa Parke (Federal Labor Member for Fremantle), Scott Ludlam (WA Greens Senator) and Aran Myalvaganam (Tamil Refugee Council Spokesperson).

In an often gripping and emotional account of the abuses suffered by the Tamils in Sri Lanka at the hands of their own government, the panel brought to light a myriad of problems relating to the crisis, beyond the obvious one of genocide – the suppression of freedom and opposition, the murder of journalists, the lack of acknowledgement of wrongdoing by the Sri Lankan government, and Australia's own role in ignoring the issue. As the panel discussion made clear, the Australian government does not publically support the UN Human Rights Council's proposal for an investigation of human rights abuses and war crimes in the country.

In all, I was left stunned by the magnitude of the crisis in Sri Lanka. The photos were incredibly graphic and I went in unprepared, having not seen the warnings on the event flyers. It was both an emotionally and politically charged event- at one point we were asked to boycott Sri Lankan cricket and Dilmah tea. But mostly, I came away less ignorant of the issue at large, from the human rights abuses suffered by the Tamils to the UN's position on the matter and Australia's place in the debate.

[Colleen Harmer, Executive Member]

GLOBAL REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

As I attended the 2014 dawn service commemorative anniversary of 99 years, in which Australian and New Zealand (ANZAC) troops landed at Gallipoli alongside allied forces, one could never experience the trepidation, anguish and terror that swept our young brave warriors minds in thinking, strange land, darkness and difficult terrain, with a hidden enemy in the hills before them. The occasion gave place to a sombre and reflective moment.

Several thousand miles away in London at Whitehall War HQ, Winston Churchill commander and Lord of British Admiralty had planned the Gallipoli landing with strategic detail –yet catastrophic, resulting in substantial loss of life. The date was 25 April 1915, two days later than originally planned.

The same remaining ANZACs would also be defeated at “Lone Pine Nek Hill” after eight months which resulted in fierce land combat and eventually evacuation of all ground military, equipment and troops, without any loss of life.

Today the war of almost a century ago continues with the heavy psychological and physical scars to those remaining.

In 2008, I attended a solemn dawn service on the other European war front that the ANZACs engaged in battle, this was Villers Bretonneau, Pozières. Known as the WW1 Western Front where our gallant Australian soldiers, with the French, defeated the German forces on 11 November 1918, it was when the war was at an end. I had the pleasure of joining the then Minister of Defence, the Right Honourable Stephen Smith at the post-dawn Australian tent.

On Anzac Day, we have shared with many Australians from all walks of life and ages, to commemorate the duty and sacrifice of our fallen and living ANZACs. Somehow we accept freedom as a natural cycle of life, however with the number of conflicts continually active today we ponder, just what the gift of freedom would mean to these humans, caught in the web of war-torn nations.

As a member of UNAAWA, and standing for the mission objectives of UN, the pledge of peace, prevention of war and to share and live in a world where equality and justice for our fellow humans regardless of colour, creed and religion must be a priority, of course we are all ambassadors of this pursuit.

Let us remember the spirit of supreme sacrifice and respect our ANZACS, whom answered the duty to arms, with unequivocal courage and bravery in their actions and delivered Australia a true place of home and peace.

“Lest We Forget”

Joseph Caruso
UNAAWA Global Representative

UNAAWA ANNOUNCEMENTS

UN World Elder Abuse Day

On Wednesday 11 June, UNAAWA representative Kay Hallahan will be one of the speakers at the “Safeguarding for Seniors” information session to commemorate World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. This free event will be held from 9am—11.30am at the Kim Beazley Lecture Theatre, Murdoch University. Morning tea is included. For information, see <http://www.advocare.org.au/sysnews/57>. Bookings essential, call Jenna from Advocare on 9479 7566.

UNAA Essay Competition – entries closing soon!

Entries into the essay competition will be closing in mid June. So if you are a senior high school student or undergraduate university student with something to say about the Millennium Development Goals, get your essays in by **5pm on 15 June**. For details, visit: <http://www.unaa.org.au/2014-un-essay-competition.html>.

Yolande Frank Competition – be creative!

Entries for the Yolande Frank art competition close on 31 July. Children aged 9-14 are encouraged to embrace their own creative expression of the Declaration of Human Rights. If you have students, kids, grandkids, nieces and/or nephews, help them to understand and artistically communicate that ‘Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay’ (Article 24 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). For more details, visit <http://www.unaa-wa.org.au/modx/art.html> or ring the Office.

NEWS FROM OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Men of the Trees—World Record Attempt

On 25 July (National Schools Tree Day), help the Men of the Trees break a Guinness World Record planting 100,000 plants in 1 hour at Whiteman Park. This world record attempt aims to promote an awareness of the role of trees and understorey in the environment and their contribution to the welfare of humanity. To register to be a part of this event, email Paula at paula@menofthetrees.com.au or ring 9250 1888. For more information on registration and donations visit: <http://www.menofthetrees.com.au/programs/greening-challenge/>.



Be connected. Follow us!

FACEBOOK:
United Nations Association of
Australia WA Inc

TWITTER: @UNAAWA



UN IMPORTANT DATES

JUNE 2014

1 June	Global Day of Parents
4 June	International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression
5 June	World Environment Day [UNEP]
8 June	World Oceans Day
12 June	World Day Against Child Labour
14 June	World Blood Donor Day [WHO]
15 June	World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
17 June	World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought
20 June	World Refugee Day
23 June	United Nations Public Service Day
23 June	International Widows' Day
25 June	Day of the Seafarer [IMO]
26 June	International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking
26 June	United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture