

Union of Australian Women Newsletter



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November 2013

November-The AGM Issue

WHAT'S ON

Monday 4 November
12 noon

UAW Darebin Group meeting
Northcote Town Hall meeting room

Southern Branch Melbourne Cup Fundraiser not being held this year

Monday 11 November
10.30 – 12.30

UAW Organising Committee meeting
2nd floor meeting room Ross House

Thursday 14 November
10.30 – 12.30

UAW Book Group
2nd floor meeting room Ross House

Sunday 17 November

NATIONAL DAY OF CLIMATE ACTION
GetUp is planning huge rallies across the nation

Monday 18 November
11.00am

Stop Violating Human Rights
Parliament House lawns
Buses from Victoria to support asylum seekers
Organised by Refugee Advocacy Network
0409 252 673

Thursday 21 November
11.00 – 2.00

UAW-Seniors Network
2nd floor meeting room Ross House

Monday 25 November

White Ribbon Day: men campaign to stop male violence against women.
It signifies the start of 16 Days of Activism to Stop Violence Against Women, which ends on Human Rights Day 10 December

Congratulations to two UAW members:

Narelle Dwyer recently won Bronze, Silver and Gold medals at the Masters' Rowing Championships in Turin, Italy.

Mary Owen has a chapter devoted to her in Patricia Edgar's new book: In Praise of Ageing". Order it at your local library.

UNION OF AUSTRALIAN WOMEN Victorian Sector

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2013

2013 seems to be passing in a flash, but a review of our activities indicates that the UAW has been active as always: informing members for action and raising our voice on a number of fronts – whether through invited speakers, newsletter, letter-writing, on-line petitions or collaborating with others.

Coffee with a Focus:

- **Dr Clare Wright: *Practising Women's History in a Post Feminist Age* AGM October 2012**
- Marg D'Arcy: *Violence, Gender and the new State Plan* November 2012
- Heather Welsh: *The Environment, Food Security and the Vital Importance of Bees* March 2013
- Gemma White, HAAG: *Home At Last* May 2013
- Jenn Clark, ASRC: *Asylum Seekers. What Now?* July 2013

Letter writing/lobbying/campaigning:

- The UAW has congratulated the ABC on a number of programs, including the screening of *Utopia Girls*, but has also expressed concern at what we see as the dumbing down of Radio National. We have stressed the necessity of an independent, well-funded public broadcaster to a democratic society.
- We have continued to campaign for a transparent, humane treatment of asylum seekers
- We have continued to support the campaign to eliminate violence against women, and have contacted State ministers on the issue.
- We have continued to campaign for same sex marriage as a matter of human rights and equality.
- We have supported on-line petitions for a number of causes, including the right for asylum seekers to work (ASRC), the raising of the appallingly low single parent payment that locks women and children into poverty (WEL), and a request that women be represented by an appropriate person in the Federal Government. We have discussed the value of on-line petitions as an effective means of campaigning.
- The UAW has written to Nicola Roxon thanking her for her huge contribution as the first female Attorney-General and to former Prime Minister Julia Gillard acknowledging her considerable courage and determination in the face of unrelenting sexism and misogyny.
- And we have continued to campaign for peace.

Membership has declined slightly, partly due to “tidying up” processes, but it remains significant at 184. Many thanks to Cath Morrison for her hard work and efficiency, including enabling membership to be renewed on-line.

We were saddened at the deaths of several members, including Molly Hadfield, Dot Young and Jean Melzer, and were shocked at the sudden death of Hellen Cooke.

In the UAW tradition of recognising and valuing people, Carol Stals wrote to Governor General Quentin Bryce and was invited to meet with her and reflect on the value of our organisation.

We were totally delighted at the recent election of member Cathy McGowan to Federal Parliament as the Independent member for Indi – the result of a terrific community campaign.

Congratulations to Sheila Byard and Pam Williams for their positions in the National Council of Women Victoria.

Branches: Darebin meets monthly, see separate report for Southern Branch. Many thanks to Clare Nugent, Allie Dawe, Amy Duncan and Mairi Neil.

Newsletter, Web page

The monthly newsletter continues to be a valuable means of communication with our members, and is particularly appreciated by country women and those who cannot get to meetings. Articles, have covered a wide range of topics: poetry and stories; the Arms trade; abortion law reform; food security and the environment; Afghanistan; peace; equal pay; feminism, gender equity and misogyny; housing; asylum seekers; reproductive health; war and its continuing aftermath. It is great to have contributions from a range of members.

Thanks to the writers and to the mail-out team organised by Fran Mackieson and Jenny Stewart, and with the regular participation of Sarah McQuarrie.

Thanks to Cath Morrison for transforming the newsletter to PDF, thereby providing the option of receiving it on-line. Thanks also for the mammoth task of producing the *Yearly Index*, and for maintaining and updating the web page.

Left Wing Ladies

Morag Loh has completed the update chapter *Having A Voice: Making A Difference. 1999 – 2012*. This was a considerable labour of love, undertaken in consultation with members, and we are deeply grateful to her. *Left Wing Ladies* is being republished by the UAW and we look forward to a celebratory launch.

Taking Time

We ended our agreement with Dr Jordy Silverstein – our vision and aims were rather different- but the subcommittee will continue work on an update in 2014.

The Women's Map There has been talk of an update, and we will further discuss that possibility with Sheila Byard.

Apron Strings and Atom Bombs has been reproduced, and is available in the office.

Informal Groups continue to give members the opportunity to meet and enjoy each other's company.

The Film Group is unfortunately reduced to a few participants.

The Book Group continues.

UAW-Seniors' Network meets quarterly.

Excursions. There was a visit to the Ballarat Art Gallery, to the Johnston Collection in East Melbourne, and an extraordinarily successful trip to Hobart and MONA – thanks to Amy Duncan and Carol Stals.

Affiliation and Co-operation:

The UAW continues to have representation on, work with and support other groups: Equality Rights Alliance – Allie Dawe; National Council of Women Victoria – Clare Nugent and Allie Dawe; UNAA Status of Women Committee – Clare Nugent; Ross House Association – Jenny Stewart; Victorian Women's Trust; Women's Health Victoria; WCTU; League of Women Voters; Emily's List; RAWA; International Alliance of Women, the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre. Carmen Green has joined the SEARCH Foundation to report back to the UAW, as organisations cannot join. Many of our members are also active in and have links to other organisations.

Organising Committee and Conclusion:

Many thanks to all members of the Organising Committee. We have worked well together and have formed good friendships. Carmen has been an excellent treasurer; we have shared the secretary's job. Thanks to all who contribute to the success of our functions. We are continuing, as an organisation, to have our voice heard and to make a difference.

Anne Sgro
President

WHERE ARE WE UP TO AND WHERE ARE WE GOING?

By Mairi Neil

Our AGM guest speaker, Mary Crooks AO is a social justice activist, who has been the Executive Director of the Victorian Women's Trust since 1996. Her background in public policy and passionate commitment to social justice has seen her undertake extensive research and advocacy on crucial issues for women, design and lead ground-breaking initiatives, including The Purple Sage Project, Ordinary Women Extraordinary Lives Exhibition, and the Watermark Australia project, an exceptional example of a nationwide, community engagement project based around issues of water sustainability. I

In 2012, Mary authored *A Switch in Time – Restoring Respect to Australian Politics*, which has been distributed widely across Australia

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mYzVz108XRw>) On their website (<http://www.vwt.org.au>) the Trust states they “invest in women & girls for positive social change; research issues which affect their lives; work in key arenas ranging from violence prevention to environmental sustainability; create opportunities that spark ideas, engagement & debate; advocate for reforms that improve conditions for women & girls; and make sure the public record better reflects their contribution and impact.” For the next half hour or so Mary explained in depth the importance of remaining engaged and what can be achieved.

She began her talk by advising everyone to read the weekend magazine in today's *The Australian* for a reliable report on Cathy McGowan and her campaign for the seat of Indi, which she won from Sophie Mirabella. Cathy's electoral popularity reflects the desire for true local representation, and she has developed a strong swag of volunteers that number into the hundreds. But she was an exception in an election that ended the era of our first female Prime Minister, Julia Gillard.

To analyse why Gillard was treated so abominably, and why few of her parliamentary colleagues spoke out on her behalf, we must look to history, and general ignorance of how difficult women's struggle for franchise and other rights has been. The mid-1800s saw women denied rights we would consider basic today. In a piece of faulty legislative drafting, the Electoral Act of 1863 enfranchised all ratepayers listed on local municipal rolls. Due to an oversight, the Parliament overlooked earlier local government legislation that had permitted women to be added to the municipal rolls for local government elections. Those women therefore now had the vote and proceeded to use it in the general election of 1864. However, Members of the Legislative Assembly hastily amended the offending clause early in 1865 by restricting the vote for parliamentary elections strictly to male ratepayers. And so began a long struggle for women to achieve full participation in Victorian parliamentary processes, with active, and often vitriolic opposition from those wanting to maintain the status quo.

The Victorian Women's Suffrage Society led by Henrietta Dugdale, worked hard in 1884, with minor success. (<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/dugdale-henrietta-augusta-3452>) But it took 25 years of hard work (and 30,000 signatures on a petition) to achieve the right to vote for women. Pilloried in the press, lampooned and ridiculed, Dugdale and other women were seen as a threat to the ruling order - maids and wives might get uppity, homes would be neglected. One in ten women signed the petition but many never got the opportunity to exercise the right to vote because it took 19 private members' bills from 1889 until Victorian women gained the vote in 1908. It was 1911 before they could exercise it. Granted the right to vote, but not the right to stand, it was nearly half a century later (1943) before a woman was elected to Federal parliament. Vida Goldstein unsuccessfully contested a Senate seat in 1903 and stood a further four times up until 1917 before she turned her considerable talents to other ways to make a difference.

On 21 August 1943, Dame Enid Lyons was elected member for the Tasmanian seat of Darwin (Braddon). (<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/lyons-dame-enid-muriel-14392>) She was the first female member of the House of Representatives; Dorothy Tangney (Labor)

was elected to the Senate at the same time. A widow with 11 children, Lyons had a pelvic fracture sustained during the birth of her first child, yet seemed to have boundless energy, never shirking from hard work. In her first term she could take some credit for the extension of child endowment, free medical treatment for pensioners and free distribution of life-saving drugs. In 1949, she became the first woman member of a Federal cabinet but later complained it was 'a toothless position' and 'they only wanted me to pour the tea'. In May 1974, Joan Child, a cleaner, factory worker and mother of five, became the first female Labor member of the House of Representatives, and later the first female speaker. Joan died this year aged 91 and at a tribute, Prime Minister Julia Gillard, said she had been an inspiration and a role model, with 'remarkable gifts of common sense, good humour and persistence against the odds'. (<http://womenustralia.anu.edu.au/biography/child-gloria-joan-16271>) Joan had a lifetime of paid and unpaid housework behind her when elected. A photographer asked her to pose pegging her washing on the line or scrubbing the dishes. She flatly refused. Women MPs before like Senator Dorothy Tangney, had been snapped pulling a roast out of the oven, or Tasmanian MP Mabel Miller, pictured mixing a salad. Joan determined to prove she was a capable politician, not an 'aproned anomaly'. She was snapped with a glass of champagne in hand!

The women who embarked on political careers were remarkable, their journeys not easy. And 110 years later when Australia has their first female prime minister, the press, men and many women appear to have no idea of the struggle to get women into parliament, let alone become the prime minister. Those of us who are aware of the struggle and the significance of having a woman at the top table, are gutted by her removal. Julia did make mistakes - saying carbon tax instead of carbon price, changing the sole-parent payment for perhaps the right reasons but causing unnecessary hardship, her stance on same sex marriage, and the shift to the right regarding treatment of asylum seekers.

Mistakes that could be legitimately criticised but undeserving of the relentless bullying and misogyny that eventuated. Even today, in The Age, journalist Mark Baker suggests Gillard brought the relentless vilification and vitriol on herself because of 'mistakes'. This is a journalist who pursued Gillard with a vengeance and has been found guilty by the Press Council of fabricating two stories around her involvement in an AWU slush fund. A story 20 years old and scurrilously resurrected by Liberal MPs, shock jocks, and journalists like Baker to discredit and undermine her prime ministership.

1. There was internal destabilisation led by Kevin Rudd, who refused to give his loyalty, and many other male MPs such as Bowen, Alan Griffiths, Kim Carr and Martin Ferguson. The disloyalty cross-factional. Rudd's treachery went unchallenged for three years, with many Labor parliamentarians complicit by their silence. He damaged Gillard's 2010 election campaign and the front bench sanctioned his misbehaviour and collusion with Julie Bishop joking about his renaming the Lodge 'Boganville'.
2. The mainstream media carried out a relentless, jaundiced Mark Baker type of assault on Gillard. Refusing to acknowledge her achievements and always amplifying her mistakes. The only person to challenge the smear campaign was Bob Brown. Larry Pickering sent a daily cartoon to every MP, lampooning 'Juliar' (and always with a dildo somewhere in the drawing) and on the day of her demise he included a coffin. Where were the voices challenging these disgraceful examples of violent sexist prejudice? What a double standard when she was pilloried for mentioning blue ties, and accused of using the gender card. And of course the constant reminders and harping about how she knifed Rudd, yet no mention of Abbott shafting Turnbull, or the removal of previous Labor leaders like Beazley, Crean and Latham. After the Grand Final breakfast Abbott refused to answer questions about refugees dying at sea. He ran from the media pack. What would have happened if Gillard had run from the press? The Murdoch and Fairfax media still don't accept responsibility for the unfair relentless negativity directed at Gillard and her government.

3. Tony Abbott and Opposition MPs practised this relentless negativity, appealing to people's prejudices, and turned politics toxic; parliament debates poisonous. Now, Abbott apologises to Indonesia and tries to undo the damage of comments made for political opportunism. Yet he receives an easy ride from the media, who think he is 'growing into the prime ministerial role'! We have a government with only 6 women out of 42 members, and only one woman considered capable of being a member of cabinet.

Do Australian women care? Media has all but ignored the insult. Abbott said there were not enough women with the merit or skill. Look closely at the behaviour and skill set of Joe Hockey, Barnaby Joyce, Andrew Robb and Christopher Pyne — what an insult they couldn't find more women to sit in Cabinet.

Mary expanded on the achievements of the VWT, acknowledging generous donations made projects possible. In 1997, two women donated \$55,000 and \$240,000 respectively and The Purple Sage Project was funded.

(<http://www.vwt.org.au/store/files/1349933628.pdf>) The Project involved a partnership with 5 other community agencies – the Brotherhood of St Laurence, The Stegley Foundation, YWCA, Victorian Local Governance Association and The People Together Project. It revolved around a community dialogue process, which extended across Victoria.

Approximately 6000 women and men in small groups of up to ten people, thoughtfully deliberated key issues and the actions needed to address them. Women constituted 75% of the hundreds of Group Leaders who played a critical role in facilitating this ground-breaking, grass roots reflective process.

Paul Heinrichs in The Sunday Age observed that the Purple Sage Project tapped into the inchoate unease that Victorians were experiencing about the Kennett revolution... and that it was to become a massive exercise in participatory democracy. The frustration and alienation, and the sense elected representatives were not listening, spurred the participants to articulate their preferred vision for the future, and identify and promote the values and conditions for community well-being. The Purple Sage Project enabled Mary to advise and support the people of Indi through kitchen table conversations.

The Voice for Indi Project, discussed candidates and ultimately chose Cathy McGowan (UAW member), seasoned, capable and smart, to stand as an independent for the seat. They identified the values important to the community: above all respect and valuing respectful engagement. They organised a timeline to campaign against sitting member Sophie Mirabella and never thought they'd win but wanted to make sure no member took the 'safe' seat for granted. They achieved a ten percent swing because the voters recognised Cathy promoted "of community, by the community and for community." She is the first female independent since the 1940s. Voice for Indi still functions, as do the supporters, marvellous examples that age and gender barriers don't exist when community comes together for a purpose. Cathy's speech on election night the epitome of respectful engagement and giving credit where credit is due

Our politics are toxic but she is showing the way for a new level of non-vitriolic contests - the people must turn the current attitudes around. Be a beacon for progress. The process of choosing and supporting Cathy driven mainly by the energy of women. Men joined but the conversation and overwhelming leadership was driven by women, proving we can play a significant and active role in democratic engagement

The aims of Purple Sage ran in a tailored way through the Watermark Project started in 2000 (http://watermark.org.au/watermark/get_your_copy_Our_Water_Mark.html). Increased 'water literacy' was the key to behaviour change, and women are well placed to engage communities in achieving deep cultural change. A grant from The Myer Foundation, and significant private funding from eight other mostly women donors, enabled the project to run over six years. A process of 'kitchen table' dialogue occurred, involving several thousand women and men, empowering citizens to be well-informed and engage with democracy.

Their experience, expertise and wisdom merged with the knowledge of scientists and technicians. Our Water Mark published and circulated throughout Australia triggered action, helped shape new school and university courses; is used by commercial enterprises to develop their water management strategies; and inspired local people to work with their water authorities. Sustainability became a definite and achievable aim.

The Dugdale Trust for Women and Girls is a new national initiative of the Victorian Women's Trust, working to reduce and prevent violence against women and girls by bringing together the leadership and commitment of men and women in addressing the root causes of violence.

The Trust also helped fund a documentary *Love & Sex in an Age of Pornography* (<http://www.documentaryaustralia.com.au/films/details/1124/love-sex-in-an-age-of-pornography>) to make people think and talk about the issue of pornography and how it degrades women, and hopefully initiate social change. The rise of the Internet and advancements in mobile technology means even prepubescents can download pornography freely, in the privacy of their bedrooms. If you feed yourself a diet of porn from teenage onwards you are hardwired to accept this is normal sex. Researchers noted a rise in the violence in pornographic videos. In the documentary, one female porn actor said, "Men are tearing women apart. I can't imagine how they would think that feels good." A male actor agreed saying that men "have to play very rough with the girl and take charge."

Mary received bouquets and bricks for initiating the purchase of full-page ads in Fairfax's *The Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald*, News Limited's *The Herald Sun* and *The Australian* on Friday 5th July 2013, entitled *Credit Where Credit Is Due*, highlighting Julia Gillard's achievements and legacy, and slamming the treatment she received from opponents. Five women donated \$94,000 to place the ads. Written by Mary on behalf of the Board and staff of the VWT, the advertisement paid tribute to the effective leadership of former Prime Minister Julia Gillard and her minority government, despite a hostile political environment and discourse. Overwhelmed by the response (over 40% from males), including donations from across the country, they were later able to place the advertisement in Italian, Greek and Chinese newspapers. Inundated with emails, cards and money, Mary found the exercise uplifting. A WW2 veteran, 'Max' donated \$200. He counterbalanced the usually white Anglo-Saxon older males who hated Julia. Mary discovered many men respected Gillard.

This mainly positive response has eased some of the despair about the appalling treatment of Julia Gillard and the election of Tony Abbott. Women must muscle in, be pro-active. Look how low the bar is to be elected to the Senate! Men representing motorists and sports, Clive Palmer throwing his weight round, defaming the AEC for his own intellectual purpose. Women have been caught wanting - we should be putting up good female candidates to represent all of us. If there is a Double Dissolution as Tony Abbott threatens will we be ready? We need independent candidates like Cathy McGowan to run for the Senate.

The Victorian Women's Trust forthcoming event on the 10 November at the Melbourne Town Hall - featuring a keynote address from former Prime Minister Julia Gillard - sold out in a matter of hours. Imagine. A world where women and girls stand equally with men and boys, and take up all of life's opportunities without fear, harm, discrimination or disadvantage

Mary announced they will now livestream the event so that people everywhere can gather and not miss out on this important address. Retired independent Federal MP, the Hon Tony Windsor will also speak. It will feature a special performance of the Women's Anthem' with a 250-strong women's choir lead by Kavisha Mazzella. (Our very own Amy Duncan will be in the choir!) Mary suggests people gather at home or in backyards and watch the event happening live at <http://www.livestreamaustralia.com.au/creditjulia/>

The Trust is also preparing a document to take the fight for equality and respect up to the minister who has responsibility for 'women's affairs': Tony Abbott. A copy will be sent to all MPs outlining a set of minimum expectations to meet regarding inequity, health, superannuation, housing, sole parenting payments ... Key facts will be included, up-to-date statistics and the actions needed.

The document will challenge Abbott to examine his prejudices and past statements like the number of teenage girls having abortions being 'a stain' on our society, remind him the pregnancies were not produced by immaculate conception and that there must be the equivalent number of boys/men engaging in irresponsible sex. The government must fund a campaign targeting men to take more responsibility.

The Great Expectations Report will hopefully generate continual questioning of the policies of Abbott's government, like the ridiculous paid parental leave scheme that ignores the plight of the majority of women struggling on low incomes.

We have work to do, there is no time for gloom and despair, we must come together, not talk to ourselves. We need to be insistent. We've accepted and accommodated over the last decade and need to look at ways to embrace women's interests and translate them as good policies. We need to emphasise what a gross insult one woman in cabinet is, although not entirely unexpected from a party where the majority of men have supportive wives at home, so this is their world view of where women should be. We need to ensure no female leader is ever again subjected to a violent sexualised campaign of destruction. Julia Gillard, admired overseas yet vilified here. Her treatment speaks volumes about Australia's 'blokey' culture, and what must change. The vociferous campaign criticising the hung parliament and coalition of Labor, Greens and Independents hypocritical considering the long acceptance of Liberal and National Party coalitions. The dishonest double standards attacking Slipper and Thomson under the excuse of probity - a joke now in the light of scandalous rorted expenses by Abbott and others, being revealed daily.

We can't rely on the media to report honestly, or be the watchdog of democracy - if we want change, we must make it happen.

UAW Organising Committee for 2014

President: Anne Sgro

Vice-President: Amy Duncan

Treasurer: Carmen Green

Secretary/ Public Officer: Jenny Stewart

Committee: Fran Mackieson, Carol Stals, Cath Morrison, Allie Dawe, Clare Nugent, Sarah McQuarrie

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 2014

by Cath Morrison

Membership for 2014 is due on January 1, 2014.

I am sending out membership renewal letters in the post at the moment.

Membership is unchanged for 2014 at \$20 for members on concessions or unwaged and \$30 otherwise for organisations.

For those members with a current email address, I am sending a copy of the renewal letter by email as an attachment as this saves paper resources and stamps.

We try to continue to keep our membership fees low by using electronic mail wherever we can. For those members who use the Internet-remember that you can pay by bank transfer into our NAB account and this is a great help to our hardworking Treasurer. Please put your surname on the bank transfer form.

Otherwise please fill out the renewal form on the back of the letter and post your cheque to UAW, 2nd floor, Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne. You can also pay by cash at a UAW function.

We are not sending renewals to members who have already paid ahead for 2014. Apologies in advance if the letter crosses with your payment.

The UAW depends so much upon member contributions and donations so please let us have your subscription renewal as soon as you can.

BANKS AND BOMBS

'Don't Bank on the Bomb' is a global report into the financing of nuclear weapons released by IKV Pax Christi and ICAN, which aims to increase the transparency of the finance sector's investments. It details how 298 private and public financial institutions continue to invest almost US\$314 billion into 27 companies involved in the production, maintenance and modernization of nuclear weapons.

In Australia the list includes ANZ, which has provided the largest amount of money to nuclear weapons producers – an estimated USD 1,487.60 million in loans since January 2010.

Other Australian financial institutions that have invested in nuclear weapons producers are AMP, Commonwealth Bank, Macquarie, Platinum Investment Management and Westpac. The full report is at www.dontbankonthebomb.com

The Future Fund has divested itself from landmines, cluster munitions and tobacco companies. Now it must divest itself from nuclear weapons companies as well. Why is tobacco not ok but nuclear weapons are. ICAN has begun a Future Fund postcard campaign – 20,000 postcards can be found on free postcard stands around the country. Look out for them. Fill one in and send it off.

ICAN: International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons

LETTERS TO THE AGE

Cath Morrison, Anne Sgro and Morag Loh have had letters published recently in The Age newspaper on issues dear to UAW members' hearts.

Cath responded to the Immigration Minister's decision to deem asylum seekers "illegals" and that this will be the language of the bureaucracy. *"This kind of nonsense belongs in Alice in Wonderland. "When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less." Contrast this to the national day of mourning declared in Italy when a large number of asylum seekers were tragically drowned. Calling refugees "illegal" is central to the government's program to demonise refugees. Labor, the Greens and the community must protest vociferously at this change.* (Age 21.10.13)

Anne responded to an article by Bruce Guthrie, written in consultation with a (male) historian, who could only name 2 women out of 25 people who were influential for Melbournians. *"Here are a few more who spring readily to mind. Dr Constance Stone, the first woman doctor to practise medicine in Victoria, she established the first hospital for women, thus marking the beginning of female specific health services; Vida Goldstein, first female parliamentary candidate in the British Empire, who led the way for women's formal representation at political level; Muriel Heagney, who championed equal pay for more than five decades and activated unions and others around a campaign that continues; and Edna Walling, landscape gardener who influenced the way we see and design gardens. Why is it so hard to think of influential women?"* (Age 20.10.13) There were no indigenous people on the list, either,

Morag raised the question of BHP Billiton and climate change: *"...the company nearly 20 years ago acknowledged 'that climate science justified action' and has 'publicly advocated action on climate change policy such as carbon pricing.'" She has written to the company asking if they had supported Gillard government policy, and if not, what do they propose.* (Age 23.10.13)

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