

Union of Australian Women

Newsletter

WHAT'S ON-FEBRUARY 2015

Welcome to 2015. We hope that you have had an enjoyable, relaxing time over the festive season and welcome you back to another year of making our voice heard and taking action. Thank you to members who have so promptly renewed membership. You will find the 2015 Diary and Southern Branch meetings included.

We look forward to your energy and support; it will be a year of campaigning.

Monday 2 February 12 noon	UAW Darebin Group Peacock Hotel, opposite Northcote Town Hall Clare: 9481 2704
Tuesday 3 February 12.30	UAW – Seniors Network Lunch at the Botanic Gardens Kiosk Closest entry, Gate A Mary: 9598 0235 or mrowen4@bigpond.com
Wednesday 11 February 10.30 – 12.30	UAW Organising Committee 2 nd floor meeting room Ross House
Thursday 12 February 10.30 – 12.30	UAW Book Group First floor room 1.3 Ross House
Thursday 19 February 11.00 – 2.00	UAW-Seniors Network Fourth floor room 4.2

MARCH

Celebrate International Women's Day with the UAW. Wednesday 18 March, 10.30 Fourth floor meeting room Ross House Speaker to be announced

VALE

**Olga Silver, UAW member for many years who recently died aged 98.
Well remembered.**

2015: what will the year bring?**By Anne Sgro**

There will be many issues, most ongoing, for which we will need energy, determination and organisation. Here are just a few.

Climate Change and the Environment. 2014 was the hottest year on record, that is since 1880. British Prime Minister Cameron is correct to state that climate change and poverty are two vital issues that need to be tackled. Action is being taken: California has made a commitment to obtaining half its power from renewable sources by 2030. Countries like Germany and Denmark already have a quarter of their power from renewable with commitment to more. Meanwhile, Australian Trade Minister Andrew Robb is backing proposed Indian development of Queensland coal in preparation for which Environment Minister Greg Hunt has endorsed dredging and dumping at Abbott Point. This will mean further, irreparable damage to the land and the Reef. Don Watson notes in *The Bush: Across the continent since Europeans first arrived, 92 per cent of old growth forest has been destroyed*. The Abbott government is hell bent on as much destruction as possible while making minimal change to address the causes of climate change.

Medicare. The government will pursue its ideological aim to dismantle our universal health scheme. (See article Page 3) Was Abbot's proposal then backflip the result of poor policy, arrogance or a strategy of brinkmanship?

Housing and Homelessness. The Abbott government has been cutting funding from homeless support and advocacy programs (Age 16.1.15) In December 2014 it withdrew \$21 million of grants that would have flowed to organisations in the homeless sector over the next four years. Only 8 in 10 rental properties in Melbourne are affordable for people on low incomes and 35,000 people are waiting for public housing. Families are increasingly sharing housing in a bid to stave off homelessness. While businesses in the city are advocating a 'move on' policy for rough sleepers, (to where, one may ask), what is needed is a massive boost to public and social housing.

Foreign Aid: spending has not only been drastically cut, but the focus now is on supporting aid-for-trade and private sector involvement in poverty alleviation and economic development. *Australia's aid program is being used as a promotional vehicle for Australia's big business abroad and to promote Australia's commercial and security interests.* (AidWatch Director). It is positively harmful as well as ineffective in alleviating poverty.

Return of Work Choices: penalty rates, the minimum wage, workplace flexibility, enterprise bargaining will all be under review by the Productivity Commission. Workers' conditions will again be under attack.

Higher education: \$15 million is being spent on marketing to pursue changes to higher education that will place a huge financial burden on young people and that have already been rejected by the Senate.

Social Welfare: Minister Scott Morrison has clearly shown his capacity for turning his back on human suffering in his previous portfolio. He will now turn his overtly Christian attention to welfare recipients and will punish the young and the elderly.

Asylum Seekers: see Page 7

The Abbott coalition government is controlled by arrogant, hard line Liberals who have a determined agenda to dismantle many public policies and to favour big business and the wealthy. They aim to crash through, unable to believe that we do get the message and don't like it. The moderates obviously have little say and their numbers have diminished. Fortunately, there are many organisations, churches and individuals who are geared to be active and who have already achieved success e.g. the doctors' campaign to proposed Medicare changes, GetUp's campaigns.

It will be an interesting year. Let's keep up the pressure in whatever way possible, and don't underestimate the power of phone calls and letters to politicians.

TWO MYTHS BEING PEDDLED BY ABBOTT GOVERNMENT - Medicare cost blowout and “Not spending beyond our means” by Cath Morrison

THE FEDERAL BUDGET IS NOT LIKE A HOUSEHOLD BUDGET

I read a fascinating article by economist Warwick Smith (University of Melbourne) in [The Conversation](#) 17/12 explaining why the Government is talking economic nonsense when insisting that balanced budgets must be achieved regardless of the pain they cause and that achieving a surplus is imperative. Hockey and Abbott often use household analogies when discussing government finances - Hockey again compared Australia's economy to a household budget in his Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook and stressed that we must live within our means. The need for balanced Federal budgets is a myth according to Smith. Why is this? Because unlike the householder with limited resources, a Government can print money! As much money as it wishes without the need to borrow! The only risk if too much money is printed is that inflation will get out of control. Smith asks: *Can the government just spend as much as it wants on whatever it wants? Of course not, the result would be out-of-control inflation. Can it spend a lot more than it currently is without substantial negative consequences? Absolutely. The slowing Australian economy combined with the dramatic fall in global oil prices mean that inflation is set to fall and unemployment is rising. This is precisely the kind of environment into which the federal government could spend without borrowing (i.e. create money). Times like these represent opportunities for the government to finance productivity improving infrastructure and provide much needed services for nothing.*

It is not only the unemployed, the sick and the disadvantaged who are paying the price for this Government's outdated ideological convictions and fixation on surplus- all Australians are losing out on opportunities to improve Government services and infrastructure.

MEDICARE COST BLOWOUT MYTHS

Catherine King (Shadow Health spokesperson) writing in [The Age \(17/1\)](#), states that three expert recent reports have proved that the Government argument that health spending is out of control and cannot continue at its current level is rubbish.

Firstly, the government's own Australian Institute of Health and Welfare revealed in its Health Expenditure Australia 2012–13 report that health expenditure is actually growing at its lowest level since it began keeping records 30 years ago. Total spending on health goods and services in Australia was just 1.5% higher for the year. When population growth is taken into account, average annual health spending of \$6,430 per person was actually down in real terms.

Secondly, according to the OECD, health spending in Australia in 2011 (the most recent year for comparisons) was 9.1% of GDP, below the average of developed nations of 9.3% and just over half the 16.3% the USA spends. Australia's health outcomes are significantly better than the OECD average. Australia's health spending (as a percentage of GDP) is lower than the OECD average.

Finally, in November 2014 the [Bettering the Evaluation and Care of Health](#) (Beach) report exposed the stupidity of the stated aim of the GP tax to cut GP visits by 1 million consultations a year (The Conversation, November 11, 2014), concluding that spending on GP services by Government provides good value. GP consultations now average 1 minute longer due to previous Labor initiatives to reward GPs spending more time with patients thus reducing reliance on specialists and emergency care and saving money overall. For example, a visit to the emergency department, which is paid by state and territory governments, costs far more than a GP visit. In Western Australia, for example, an emergency department visit in 2011-12 cost \$599 on average

Ms King concludes that the current attack on health costs is proof that the entire rationale for the GP tax is nothing more than an ideological attempt to gut health and wreck Medicare. It is hard to think otherwise.

ANNA BURKE: ASYLUM SEEKER POLICY AND OTHER MATTERS. Report of 2014 AGM**by Mairi Neil**

President Anne Sgro introduced our guest speaker, Anna Burke, Federal MP for Chisholm, a community activist and former speaker of the House of Representatives, and a participant in a recent programme of Kitchen Cabinet on the ABC. <http://Annaburke.com>.

Anna and her fellow MP Melissa Parke, Federal member for Fremantle (<http://www.melissaparke.com.au>) tried to change the minds of members of the Labor Caucus regarding ALP policy on asylum seekers. Speaking out was a brave action in the current climate. With her progressive background, Anna was an ideal speaker for our AGM. Anne acknowledged Anna's generosity giving time on the eve of the Victorian State Election.

Asylum Seekers

Anna acknowledged UAW members Amy Duncan and Val Campbell, and their work with Labor for Refugees, where for years they have been chipping away at the ALP to improve its policy.

The issue should never have become a political football or divisive issue. Refugees are human beings. John Howard created 'the other', scaring people, waging a campaign, which led to fear and loathing and the demonisation of people attempting to find a safe country. Morrison took that stirring of fear to new heights when he suggested the police should be told where refugees live suggesting they need to be monitored. Of course, Morrison and others like him claim to be Christian. (What irony considering Joseph and Mary had to flee the persecution of King Herod with baby Jesus — therefore Jesus was a refugee.)

Refugees flee because they must, a concept Morrison & Co don't seem to grasp and linking them with terrorism is shocking considering most are fleeing from acts of terror. There is a refugee crisis throughout the world, but not for us. Worldwide it is a huge issue creating a humanitarian crisis in the Middle East, and even Europe, but this is not impacting on our borders. Currently, there is legislation before Parliament to deal with caseloads — 30,000 people are in limbo — some in detention, others in community living on charity because they have no rights to work! Morrison wants to reinstitute Temporary Protection Visas so these asylum seekers will never be granted permanent residency.

Morrison has rewritten the UN Convention supporting rights of refugees yet Australia was a champion of this in the 1950s. Anna acknowledged that it was Melissa Parke, MP, who drove the move to speak to Caucus. She rang Anna and read her motion and Anna agreed to back her in Caucus. They knew there would be no immediate change, but felt the ALP and the whole country need to debate this issue, and hopefully it will be kept alive until the ALP National Conference in June 2015, when there will be opportunity to debate and change policy.

Do political parties lead, or follow?

This is not an easy issue and politicians have a fear of electoral backlash. Anna is aware that both she and Melissa have seats where there is support for their view on the refugee issue. However, if Anna was outspoken on same sex marriage, the large number of her community belonging to the Greek Orthodox Church would take offence. Likewise she has a large number of Buddhists in her community who may be motivated to support or reject a particular issue.

The ALP has lost votes over the asylum seeker issue because it was allowed to become a political football. This stems from the Tampa crisis and the flagrant ignoring of the law of the sea and the SAS boarding the ship.

Then Peter Reith embroiled the ADF in the children overboard affair, the veracity of the claims challenged by Virginia Trioli, and the Coalition won the election on the back of that backlash.

However, both main parties have raced to the bottom on the issue ever since — manipulating and politicising an issue that should be free of party politics. We should seek a bipartisan solution. Indonesia will get tougher in a regional sense, especially if Australia is not pulling their weight to find a solution. We need to acknowledge and deal with why Tamils and Hazaras still need to flee. The United Nation's figures suggest over 50 million people are displaced and seeking refuge — a world record. There are more Syrians out of Syria than remain there!

Seven million people are seeking asylum, but most just want to go home. If internal conflicts are solved most would return home. 3% of those 7 million seek to come to Australia. Most Tamils' first preference is Canada because there is a large Indian community there. Of the 3%, we take 13,000 as our humanitarian quota. The ALP policy pre-election was to increase this to 20,000 — it has **never been increased**, there was an election, but now the Liberals lie about that figure.

The notion of queue jumping is ridiculous. There is no queue, yet again the Liberals proceed with this lie and talk about 'deserving refugees' with a huge cost to human life. Off-shore processing was introduced by the ALP and Anna as Speaker was not at the Caucus meeting. She was appalled they did this. She is glad Melissa's motion started a debate — accepting and supporting asylum seekers is just the right thing to do!

There are changing dynamics within the world. Not all those fleeing are economic refugees, or fleeing starvation or conflict. There are anomalies, but everyone has the right to flee persecution and fear.

One example is an Italian family seeking asylum because they fear the Mafia if they return home. Not economic, not a war zone, but a fear of injury, nevertheless.

Anna admits as a parliamentarian she has been stung in the past sixteen years when people have sought help and lied, but that's life. What is the point persecuting people who arrive here safely, placing them in off-shore detention, yet say the policy is in

place to stop drowning? We killed two people in our care and countless others are being harmed, whether self-harming or abuse by other inmates!

Canada, America and Australia are the only 3 countries who will take refugees who have made transitory stops. The crisis in Africa and the Middle East is flooding Europe with refugees. Climate change will result in many more refugees, especially in the Pacific. New Zealand already is dealing with this and an increase in the number of Pacific islanders seeking refuge. Australia must face reality and discuss our responsibilities in this global crisis.

Anna confided there is pressure from people against Halal Certification and fear of the Chinese buying property. There is a demand from some that Australia return to its Christian-Judean roots... the situation not helped by the comment of Attorney General, George Brandis, that 'people have a right to be bigots' — xenophobia manifests in hysterical lobby groups, dog whistling and demonisation.

Most people just want to live peaceably. Put their children through school, get on with their neighbours and establish a productive life. We must have conversations with neighbours and counteract nonsense like that spouted by the Liberal member for Lindsay in NSW who said refugees cause the traffic congestion in Paramatta and take Aussie jobs.

Response to Questions & Comments from the floor:

Julian Burnside' speech at the Sydney peace Prize well worth noting. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-11-06/julian-burnside-slams-federal-government-for-human-rights-abuse/5870280>

It is acknowledged that treble the number of people come in o Australia by plane than by sea and the majority of overstayers are white and English.

We should be talking about population and sustainability. Those on 457 visas are accused of taking Australian jobs; most will stay, they are reducing wage rates and many are Irish because Ireland's economy is struggling. People on student visas often overstay too, plus 200,000 migrants come here a year. The humanitarian intake is tiny in comparison.

The group Grandmother's Against Children in Detention held a poignant exhibition recently in Melbourne. There was a cage with dolls and people were encouraged to "free" a child (doll) and sign a note to their MP that they want children released from detention. Lots of people participated, but a French woman stopped with an angry diatribe her country had been 'ruined' by refugees. Positive messages are not getting across in the news, nor the fact that many ordinary people are ashamed at the treatment of refugees.

What about stateless Palestinians - what country do they 'go back to'? Most of those on the Tampa eventually went to NZ, then came back to Australia on visas! Detention is cruel and barbaric. The uncertainty and not knowing the future for years takes a terrible toll on sanity and health.

Anna promised to check if Shadow Minister Richard Marles had presented a petition from the people of Geelong re asylum seekers. She said there was an Australian parliamentary website where people can check about petitioners and whether they'd been presented.

Comment was made about the arrest of people of faith drawing attention to Australia's inhumane policies. Police were called to the offices of MPs to remove people of faith praying for asylum seekers. Anna said that it is not individual MPs calling police to remove interfaith prayer groups, but the Department of Finance policy to ring police once they are notified the prayer group will be there.

Mary Crook spoke about curbing population in continents like Africa and increasing aid so there can be educational programs regarding population control. Unfortunately, the Liberals have slashed the aid budget and there is now an emphasis on that budget being based on trade.

Child mortality is an important indicator. If a woman feels she has to produce 10 children because only 3 will survive to adulthood she will keep having children. However as living standards improve the more education a woman has, the less children she will have.

Comment was made that there is a lot of misinformation about the money refugees get from the government, as well as attacking Aborigines and single mothers for their welfare payments. Envy is a terrible thing and produces horrible emails and dishonest rants. Anna suggested those who spread the misinformation should be directed to the Centrelink Website!

There is a 10 year waiting list for priority housing — no one is having it easy, and so many people on Centrelink payments are living below the poverty line!

Recently we hosted the G20, but there was also the L20, discussing labour laws and conditions, the F20, discussing global finance and C20, discussing civil society. Tim Costello addressed world leaders, and expressed concern at our low foreign aid budget.

Most refugees coming here are the result of conflict. In Afghanistan and Iraq there is still war and we were involved in those conflicts and still are. Why are we not doing more to stop those governments persecuting people?

Anna said it was a sad reflection that she gets four times as many emails complaining about the treatment of animals than of refugees. Is it because animal rights groups are well organised, or that people care more about cattle and sheep than they do about people?

(Footnote: Morrison's heinous legislation passed the last sitting of parliament with the support of several Senators on the cross bench emotionally blackmailed with the promise of children being released from detention only if they supported the bill!)

President Anne Sgro thanked Anna for her frank and open address and her willingness to answer and discuss whatever the meeting threw at her. We have a long way to go regarding treatment and policy of asylum seekers, and a lot of work ahead for social justice!

BRUNCH FOR PEACE AT THE BEACH DECEMBER 2014- REPORT**By Mairi Neil**

On Saturday, December 6, Southern Branch held our annual end of year gathering at the foreshore in Mordialloc. As usual a table in the sheltered rotunda groaned with food and Amy had even brought several bottles of champagne to toast a good year of action and to celebrate the winds of change. Everyone happier now we have a Labor Government in Victoria - giving hope we can be rid of Abbott when it is the Federal Election.

A positive vision and attitude, hope for change and lots of hard work helps achieve social justice, and so it was fitting our last speaker for the year was Romina Beitseen, the CEO of CICD (Campaign for International Cooperation and Disarmament) the only peace organisation remaining active since 1959!

Romina gave a rundown of the organisation's history for those who may not have heard it before. The founders were from trade unions, peace activists and from various churches. It was an international organisation anti-war and anti-nuclear proliferation – in Australia, anti-uranium mining.

In 1958 a peace congress was held in Stockholm and from that seed the Australian and New Zealand CICD became the broadest peace based congress of that time, officially formed in Victoria in 1959 to actively campaign for peace and disarmament. In the 1970s the organisation spearheaded the anti-Vietnam war movement. They established a 15 minute program on 3CR every Sunday and although other organisations have come and gone, CICD is continuous. When Pauline Mitchell, an ex-Queensland journalist and Secretary of the organisation, died in 2013, Romina who had been volunteering with the organisation offered to become even more involved and pro-active. There is concern about the US spying satellites and the increased presence of US troops on Australian soil.

Romina volunteered to do the 3CR Program from 9.15-9.30am Sunday mornings. It is important to deliver alternative news to mainstream media. She aired her first program December 22, 2013, and since 26/1/2014 has continued the weekly program with good responses from listeners. She also produces a monthly newsletter, covering a lot of news about the Middle East and challenging the tactics of divide and conquer of the US and their Allies.

Romina asked the question - **What is Peace - and is it possible?!**

Peace is when people resolve conflict without violence, but also work towards equality and a peaceful existence. People living in safety, everyone equal before the law, a system of justice protecting citizens, everyone contributing to political discussions with an equal voice, basic access to decent living conditions, health services, and to employment, negotiated workers' rights...

Peace is not the situation in the Middle East over the last 15 years and people must question what has war achieved?

Afghanistan - there is no peace or democracy – nothing that the US promised has happened. What has happened since the Soviets moved out and the US moved in?

Libya - under Gadaffi did not invade its neighbours. (Contrast with Algeria where 200,000 died). There was a living standard better than most countries in the region, free health and free education. However, the US and its Allies (mainly Qatar) supported freedom fighters who have now moved to Syria to facilitate regime change there. What improvements have there been in Libya?

According to US President George Bush there needed to be a 'New World Order', but instead hundreds of thousands have been killed or displaced. Freedom Fighters are now in Iraq and given money to create chaos between Shias and Sunnis. Money coming from outside as those who want to control the region's resources create havoc.

Iran and Iraq and other countries in the region have oil and gas - resources international companies and their governments want to control. Yet for all these riches extracted from other countries at terrible human cost where is the evidence it is benefiting countries like the US? Romina visited New York and Los Angeles and was shocked at the numbers of unemployed and homeless. The government has not looked after them when many lost everything because of the GFC (Global Financial Crisis). There is a place in New York called the Cardboard City - a suburb not on any map - a place of living proof of the huge gap between those who are rich and powerful and those who are left behind.

These are the issues that concern Romina and others at CICD and always have done. She is determined to grow the organisation, but also to preserve its history. She discovered that Melbourne University purchased the photographs and files of John Ellis, a photographer who put lots of documents together and indexed them, detailing who, what, where – invaluable records for the period 1959-1990.

<http://gallery.its.unimelb.edu.au/imu/imu.php?request=multimedia&irn=5114>

Romina called on John again to help write a book about the organisation. He is 86 years old and was volunteering at the International Bookshop – he started the project straight away! They discussed how to get the material already archived and other material since the 90s into a format so the public can use it. They are writing the history of the CICD. Initially they thought of getting a PhD student to write it as part of their studies, but it took too long to get this together. John Ellis contacted two professors he knew: Stuart McIntyre and his honours student Phillip Deery, both historians took up the project. The history will be published in two parts.

CICD likes to work with other likeminded organisations to be more effective. Churches like the Unitarian Church always supportive. There were three ministers actively involved in starting CICD: Unitarian, Methodist and Presbyterian. They worked very hard, and Sam Goldbloom was a towering figure and the public face of CICD for many years. A courageous man in a conservative society who stood with trade unionists and communists.

Romina is trying to mobilise people to campaign for peace and be as effective as the Vietnam Moratorium days - an admirable aim, which everyone present applauded at the end of her presentation.

We have a lot of work to do in 2015, but as ever we will do it together and be grateful we have each other and can enjoy each other's company while working for peace and social justice. Happy New Year to everyone from Southern Branch!

UAW UPDATE

Anne Sgro

UAW Organising Committee for 2015

President: Anne Sgro
Vice-President: Amy Duncan
Treasurer: Patrizia Archivio
Public Officer: Jenny Stewart
Members: Carmen Green, Cath Morrison, Fran Mackieson.

Meetings will be held on the second Wednesday of the month at Ross House and are open to all members. We will be pleased to have your ideas and suggestions for action – you don't need to be a member of the Organising Committee to participate.

Thank you again to all who have renewed membership so promptly, and many thanks for the generosity of your donations – rest assured that the money will be put to good use. We love to receive your notes of appreciation and encouragement whether in a formal card (Ann Robertson): *Dear Anne and Amy and All – thank you very much for being and doing so much for all us members and many more – the UAW newsletter does get around and has an important voice – good on you...keep on keeping on;* or on a scrap of paper included with membership; or in an email: (Priscilla Todd, editor of IAW News): *I always read your newsletter with much interest. This is just a quick note to wish you all the best for the coming year and continued success for the UAW.*

Thanks to the work of Cath Morrison, the **2013/2014 Newsletter Index** will soon be available. It will be emailed to members who receive their newsletter electronically; hard copies will be available in the office and mailed out on request.

2015 Palm Sunday March: the UAW has again endorsed the march which will focus on the issue of asylum seekers.

IAW International Campaign – draft proposal. The International Alliance of Women, to which the UAW is an affiliate, is proposing an international campaign to prevent and eradicate gender-based crimes against women and to demand accountability for such crimes in armed conflict, post-conflict refugee situations and in everyday life.

The catalyst for the campaign was the trial of Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo in the International Criminal Court in The Hague that concluded in November 2014. Bemba is the former vice-president of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Commander-in-chief of the Mouvement de Liberation Congo. The trial opened in 2010. Brigid Inder, Executive Director of the Women's Initiative for Gender Justice: *the Bemba trial has broken new ground for the ICC with evidence of sexual violence and charges for gender-based crimes comprising a significant part of the Prosecution case. The Bemba case marks the first case before the ICC that an accused has been charged with command responsibility, including the act of rape committed by members of the militia group over which he exercised control.*

The campaign, proposed for the week of 10-17 May, is focused on raising awareness about the alarming increase of and frequent impunity for gender-based crimes around the globe. The issue of gender discrimination/violence/honour killing/infanticide/discriminating legislation, etc will vary from country to country but the aim is to raise concerns in home countries and exert pressure via a concerted action.

The item will be on the agenda at our February meeting. While Australia is not involved in the kind of conflict that engulfs many countries with devastating consequences for women, we do have the totally unacceptable situation of 1 woman a week being killed by her current/former intimate partner.

UNION OF AUSTRALIAN WOMEN**Victorian Section****DIARY FOR 2015**

ORGANISING COMMITTEE MEETINGS: Wednesdays on the following dates from 10.30am to 12.30pm. : Room 1.3 first floor except for Feb (2nd floor) and April R1.1

11 February	11 March	8 April
13 May	10 June	8 July
12 August	9 September	14 October
11 November		

GENERAL MEETINGS: COFFEE WITH A FOCUS

Wednesday 18 March	10.30am	fourth floor meeting room Ross House	IWD
Friday 17 July	10.30am		
Tuesday 17 November	10.30am	AGM	

BOOK GROUP: meetings held from 10.30am to 12.30pm on the second Thursday of the month as follows. Room 1.3, first floor except for October and November (2nd floor).

12 February	12 March	9 April	14 May
11 June	9 July	13 August	10 September
15 October	12 November		

UAW-SENIORS NETWORK: quarterly meetings as follows - 11.00am to 2.00pm, 4th floor room 4.2

19 February	21 May	20 August	19 November
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BRANCHES.

DAREBIN GROUP meets on the first Monday of each month; for details see the UAW monthly newsletter.

The **SOUTHERN BRANCH'S** meetings are listed on a separate flyer.

CHILDREN IN DETENTION

The following shocking information comes from the Department of Immigration and Border Protection as at 30 November 2014:

- 711 children are held in Australia's secure immigration detention facilities
- 104 of these children were detained on Christmas Island
- 155 of these children are detained on Nauru
- 1,633 children are detained in the community under residence determinations i.e. Community Detention
- 2,103 children are living in the community on Bridging Visas which mean that their parents generally have no work rights and very limited access to any government support.

(From Grandmothers Against the Detention of Refugee Children www.grandmothersadrc.org)

Hundreds of asylum seekers on Manus Island have been engaged in a hunger strike that the Minister, following the pattern of his predecessor, originally denied was happening. They are rightly concerned and desperate about their future in Papua New Guinea. We need an end to secrecy and denial, and some real responses to a growing human crisis

We need to start putting concerted pressure on the new Minister Peter Dutton: peter.dutton.mp@aph.gov.au or the electorate office: 07 3205 9977

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