

WFWP Australia: Global Women's Peace Network partnership award ceremony

Anne Bellavance
April 8, 2017



On April 8, 2017, Kosina Hanson, our lovely MC, began the evening with a welcome to country and Anne Bellavance gave an introduction about the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW61) at the UN in New York, where eight delegates from Oceania attended. Anne also highlighted the work of WFWP International, with this year's community dinner commemorating 25 years of our international activities, plus our activities in Victoria. Giulia Iacono, our new secretary and coordinator of the Island Projects gave an overview of ongoing Oceania Projects and two new initiatives: the Scholarship program and the micro-credit program.



This year, WFWP Oceania initiated the Global Women's Peace Network partnership award. This prestigious award is given to one organization each year, in each of our Chapters. The Global Women's Peace Network (GWPN) is a project of WFWP International and established with the goal of creating a

peaceful world; aiming to strengthen and enhance cooperation among Women's organizations beyond political, racial, cultural and religious backgrounds. The GWPN adheres to the principle that women working together, taking initiative and empowering one another across traditional lines of race, culture and religion to create healthy families are resolving the complex problems of our societies and world.

This year's recipients were the United Muslim Sisters of Latrobe Valley (UMSLV). Arfa Khan (president) and Khatija Halibi (founder) are both WFWP members and received the award from Dr. Mimmie Watts (WFWP Vic. Patron) The UMSLV were selected to receive this award because both organizations have similar goals and work to empower women, and foster peacebuilding within their communities. The reading on the award sums up the purpose of the partnership: Women working together to realize one global family rooted in a culture of sustainable peace. Presented to (organization) for your inclusive partnership with the Women's Federation for World Peace, Australia; that place people and the planet at the center. Through this partnership both organization will support each other's work and stand as advocates for our common goals.

The UMSLV began four years ago as a united women's voice for all Muslim denominations in the Latrobe Valley, a region adjacent to Melbourne. The UMSLV have been instrumental in bringing the Muslim community and broader community together to better understand our differences, but most importantly to celebrate our likenesses. Through events such as Understanding Scarves and Understanding Journey's, a climate of acceptance, understanding and friendship has been established in the Latrobe Valley amongst a broad range of women.



Highlights of the evening were honoring our Board and volunteers who helped develop the activities of WFWP Victoria and Australia throughout the year. Our new caterers, 'Bay Leaf Kitchen' provided an Australian and Indian three course meal. Vanitha Prabaear and her husband are a new Australians who originate from India. As a start-up company, Vanitha has become our official caterer for all our events; offering exceptional service with healthy and tasty meals that cater for all dietary requirements. We are very grateful for her heart of service.

In the key of B Community Choir began in 2012 as the Brunswick Neighborhood House Community Choir, where they meet on Monday nights. Ruth Kennedy, the choir's director and conductor is a member of WFWP Victoria and has performed at a number of our events over the years. We are very grateful that Ruth could bring the choir along to perform for us and be our primary entertainment during the evening. The choir has performed at the Malthouse Theatre in "the Events", at Brunswick Music Festival, Sydney Road Street Party, Moonee Valley Festival, Melbourne International Comedy Festival, Peppertree Place Garden Fiesta's, SPAN's Sustainable Living Festival, Food Pay Love for Women's Health in the North, Peace Meals at the Social Studio, City of Darebin and Moreland City Council Citizenship Ceremonies, Moonee Valley City Councils Aged and Disability Christmas Dinner & Lights Tours, Brunswick and Coburg Libraries Saturday Sessions, Coburg Farmers Market and CERES Organic Market, Open Table dinners, BNH Annual General Meeting and at end of term events.



Thank you to the City of Monash for supplying the Community Centre; all the supporting organizations who contributed towards the raffle prizes, our youth volunteers, Giulia and Ashley for serving us during the evening with a happy spirit; Kosina who Emceed, our WFWP Board who pulled it all together; our volunteers on the night; our members who shared together during the evening; and, to the In the Key of B Community Choir for sharing their fun and beautiful voices with us.

It was a great night.