

Oxfam - Diamond Valley Newsletter



December 2008 Web: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~dvoxfam>
Email: AHIE.Stewart@bigpond.com

**Next Oxfam-Diamond Valley
Meeting**
8pm Friday February 20th,
Nillumbik Living and Learning
Centre, 739 Main Rd Eltham.
Planning for 2009

Oxfam Australia Diamond Valley Group Annual Report 2008

The 2007-8 year has been another varied and interesting program, providing new perspectives, information and challenges. The energy and enthusiasm of the members continues to make it one of the more active Oxfam groups and it has made a real contribution to both the local and the international communities.

In February, Christina Hill, working with **Oxfam's Mining Ombudsman** gave a presentation about the work of the Ombudsman and impact of mining on women.

At the April meeting, Abdelhadi Matar, President of the **Darfur Community Association of Australia**, spoke to the group about the tragedy of Darfur. He is also involved with the Darfur Australia Network (DAN), a not-for-profit community organization run by the Darfur community to raise awareness about the continuing tragedy in the Darfur region of Sudan, to assist in the resettlement of Darfuri refugees and build solidarity between the Australian people and the people of Darfur.

In May, Bruce Eady talked about the significant progress made in **Bangladesh** to prevent the widespread loss of life that has traditionally occurred in times of flood and the role that Oxfam has played in this program.

At the June meeting, Doug Franklin gave a presentation about **desalination plants** and their contribution to future water supplies, while Ant Clark talked about the leaflet entitled "**Lifting the lid on toilet injustice**" in this International Year of Sanitation".

More recently we were challenged to take up the **Fair Trade** challenge, hearing about the World Vision "Don't Trade Lives Campaign", getting an understanding of the broader fair trade issues from Jeff Atkinson and how we can work towards making Nillumbik a fair trade council from Donna Parker.

For the financial year ended 30 June 2008, we had fewer fundraising events: The **Book Fair** in October 2007 raised over **\$13,000**. Many people helped to make the bookfair so successful. A special thanks to Beth Pender for coordinating the Book Fair, but many others helped both beforehand in the sorting and on the day. Thanks also to Val Byers for coordinating the sale of the tea and coffee. The sale of **fair trade commodities** also contributed **several hundred dollars**. All these people require a special thank you but have been supported in many ways by other members.

Group members again participated in other Oxfam fundraising events, including **Trailwalker** and the sale of **Christmas Trees**. Some members supported the locally organised **Eastern Suburbs Walk Against Want**.

The group has associated itself through various events with the Eltham Bookshop in several book events and the "**World Matters**" weekend. Of particular note was the presentation of Duncan Green, the **Head of Research at Oxfam GM**, about his book '**Poverty to Power**', with over 50 people attending.

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Many group members have made varied and important contributions to the life of the group over the past 12 months. On behalf of the group I want to thank a number of them: Carol and Marguerite for planning and arranging the monthly meetings, John for producing the newsletters and being the publicity contact/webmaster, Alister for being Treasurer and Elizabeth for compiling the minutes and taking over the task of the newsletter mid year.

The Diamond Valley group is an important part of our local community providing a broader Australian and international perspective, which we hope is found to be both stimulating and challenging. I look forward to it continuing with even greater vigour in the coming year.

Stephen Lavender, Chairman

World Matters

At the debrief on World Matters, the bookshop thanked the 14 community groups and dedicated individuals whose valiant voluntary efforts made the event an outstanding success. Oxfam, the Nillumbik Reconciliation Group, Watsonia Poets, East Timor Women Australia and Micah, in particular, were well represented at every session, and the sheer physical grit and wisdom with which help was rendered for set up, during the festival and at the end cannot go unsung. In fact, it is the unique effort of the community groups that has made it possible for a representation to be made to the Shire for help if 'World Matters', 'Past Matters' and 'New Voices' is to continue. The request has been to enshrine the three festivals in the same manner as the annual Jazz, Eltham and Wattle festivals have become important calendar dates. By

the end of the final event on Sunday, which focused on asylum seeker issues, 'World Matters' had been attended by 450 people. This in itself should make it deserving of Shire support.

Meera Govil, Eltham Bookshop

State Committee's Climate Change Forum, 18th November:

State Committee performs two functions:

1. Acts as a bridge between the Board and members
2. Promotes Oxfam's ends. It has held three functions, the others being on 'Close the Gap', and the impact that unfair trade practices have on the developing world, specifically on the Pacific Islands. I.T. is used to reduce face-to-face meetings.

Prof. David Karoly, Federation Fellow, School of Earth Sciences, University of Melbourne:

The **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change**, formed 20 years ago, produced its 4th Assessment Report in 2007:

- In the 21st century anthropogenic CO₂ will cause a sea rise over the next 1000 years.
- There'll be more frequent heat waves and heavy precipitation events.
- Snow and ice will decrease in the Arctic and Antarctic.
- The concentration of CO₂ has been increasing over the last 700 years. More is dissolved in the ocean, which is becoming more acidic, making it hard for marine life to extract carbonate to make skeletons or shells. It's about the same as about 70 million years ago, when a mass of marine life was destroyed.

The impacts are greatest in warmer climates, in developing countries. There's more rain when wet, less in dry areas,

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including the subtropics, and more evaporation, leading to more intense droughts. Hundreds of millions of people are exposed to increased water stress.

A secondary increase is projected 90 years hence. Most corals will be bleached by increased acidity. Australian alpine systems are doomed. There'll be increased grain in middle and higher latitudes, and a change in the distribution of some disease vectors, e.g. mosquitoes.

The sea level rise 2000-2010 is at the upper level of the IPCC projections.

Haiku: Climate is warming
Poor will suffer, rich will cope
We are causing it!
P.S. It will get worse.

The **UN Framework Convention on Climate Change** includes the principle: Parties should protect the climate system on the basis of equity. The developed countries should take the lead in combating climate change.

Australia needs to reduce CO2 emissions by 80% to get to the average.

Garnaut: Aim to stabilize CO2-eq at 450ppm by 2015; even then sea level rise would be 3m.

Australian CO2 emissions were reduced by 10% '90-'97 by a reduction in land clearing. Adverse impacts will be greater in more vulnerable groups, e.g. the poor and elderly. Australia produces more than 450ppm of greenhouse gases.

Tuvalu speaker: Melbourne's 130 member Tuvalu community and Kiribati people meet. *Kiribati is 2m above sea level.* Her family will decide at Christmas which aunty to sponsor to move to Melbourne based on whose children have studied hardest!

The Edmund Rice Foundation has an exchange programme for children to go to Kiribati for 3 months, where they experience the joy of life without TV, PCs, etc.

What benefits could come from a reduction in energy use?

- More exercise
- Experience the environment
- Save money

Victoria has the least efficient electricity production in the world.

According to the Victorian government's wedge analysis, out 10 days ago, a 54% reduction can be achieved in 12 years.

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre: Success! A Grant of \$20,000 for our Theatre Project

The ASRC has received a grant from the Arts Council for a theatre project to be called 'Journey of Asylum'. The following excerpts from our submission show what the project aims to do:

"Asylum Seekers have approached the ASRC wanting to participate in a drama group. As asylum seekers wait in limbo for a decision on their refugee status and are destitute, without the right to work or study or volunteer, they are bored, lonely, socially isolated and at risk of developing mental health issues. Many asylum seekers have approached the ASRC wanting to participate in a drama group.

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Committee Squanders Chance to End Failed Mandatory Detention policy, Tuesday Dec 2, 2008:

"The much awaited report of the **Joint Standing Committee on Immigration Detention** is a massive disappointment – it fails to deliver the judicial or legislative oversight which is necessary to ensure that asylum seekers can no longer be indefinitely and arbitrarily locked up in an Australian detention centre", says Kon Karapanagiotidis, CEO of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre. "Freedom and Liberty are corner-stones of our democracy. Under these recommendations Immigration has unfettered power to deprive a person of their liberty for 12 months and then to extend this if they wish."

It is the recommendations in the **Dissenting Report** by Mr Petro Georgiou MP, Senator Dr Alan Eggleston and Senator Sarah Hanson Young which provide the policy model for the reception of asylum seekers which accords with the International Human Rights conventions which Australia signed in good faith. These recommendations include the judicial oversight of detention, which will ensure that the illegal detention of Australian citizens ceases, and that vulnerable asylum seekers will not have to endure indefinite arbitrary imprisonment.

The Committee report fails to acknowledge both the evidence and recommendations made by lawyers, human rights groups and refugee advocates at the hearings around Australia over the past 4 months.

The report fails in key areas as it:

1. Accepts without question the myth that 'security, health and identity' are such risks

that they justify the ongoing mandatory detention of asylum seekers.

2. Entrusts all power in the ongoing detention of people in the hands of the Department of Immigration (DIAC) without judicial oversight.

3. Recommends a 12 month maximum period for which a person can be detained but leaves even this to the unfettered discretion of DIAC if they can 'demonstrate' a risk to the community.

4. Leaves the monitoring role of holding the government accountable for detention with the Ombudsman's office, which has only recommendatory powers and no power to release people from detention.

5. Provides for no independent monitoring or oversight mechanism to ensure that the recommendations on the removal/deportation of asylum seekers are carried out.

Kon Karapanagiotidis, CEO of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC)

ASRC Fundraising:

From the last week of November, you can help in:

- Processing and packing of merchandise from ASRC Christmas Catalogue
- Processing receipts and thank you letters to those making donations via the Christmas Appeal

- Data entry

- MARKET - looking for a few volunteers to staff an ASRC Stall at the City of Darebin Carols in All Nations, Saturday 13th December - 6pm - 10pm

If you can help out in any way - even if it is just one shift, please let me know.

Kristine

ASRC Fund Raising 9326 6066

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Gifts for Asylum Seekers:

Brand New Underwear and Socks!
Women's, Men's and Children's!

\$10 overseas phone cards: Give people the chance to speak to their loved ones! Available at 7/11 stores and Asian grocers.
Tip: Look for ones with no flag fall charge such as the 'Cactus' card. Usually the seller will be helpful and let you know the better value ones. You can buy general or continent specific cards, we need them all!!!!

1GB or 2GB USB memory sticks
Vital for every high school & university student! It is our aim to equip each student with one for the coming school year
NEW – **Back packs** for school bags
NEW – **Lunch boxes & drink bottles**
To pack up that healthy lunch!

Baby Toiletries
Shampoo, baby wash and baby wipes
Help keep our newest little Australians smelling sweet!

Movie Tickets
Each year we like to give our teens a trip to the flicks (*something that's impossible when mum & dad are on no income!*)

New Board Games
Always great fun the whole family can enjoy!

Gift Vouchers
Coles/Myer vouchers, Safeway/Big W vouchers \$20-\$25

FOOD!!!!!!!
Our food bank provides food for hundreds of people each week & ALWAYS needs donations, especially long life milk, toiletries,

fresh fruit and veg, cereal...well everything!
PLASTIC? FANTASTIC..

A call for plastic supermarket bags for use in material aid, fundraising and foodbank.

ASRC Employment Programme

Do you need someone to help clear your garden before the summer holiday? Or your windows cleaned to let the sun in? Two young men, fit and very keen, are looking for gardening or cleaning work (outdoors and indoors). They can also do labouring or farm work.

They both need work urgently, and are free immediately. One lives in Footscray, the other in Bayswater.

A young man who is hardworking and reliable, with an easy-going nature, is looking for work in the inner or Northern suburbs. He is a qualified mechanic who hopes to secure employment in car detailing work, car wash work or kitchen hand work. Please contact the Employment Program at employment@asrc.org.au or 0411 556 521 and speak to Sophie or Gavin for more information.

DIAMOND VALLEY OXFAM

MEETINGS

8.00pm 3rd Friday of each month
Living and Learning Nilumbik
739 Main Rd Eltham, Melway Ref 21 J7

OFFICE BEARERS

Meeting Chairman - Stephen Lavender 9439 2063
Meeting Organizers - Carole Wigg 9439 7272
Marguerite Marshall 9439 3232
or 0422 042 099
Treasurer & Membership - Alister Rowe 9435 5958
Publicity Officer & Webmaster - John Kent 9434 6882
Minutes Secretary - Elizabeth Stewart 9459 4429
Book Fair Coordinator - Beth Pender 9439 1716
Trade Winds Tea/Coffee - Val Byers