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Celebrating our history, advancing our future

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February 2012

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Dr Raie Goodwach

Dear VMWS members,

Happy New Year!

Your VMWS committee has been busy organising our 2012 calendar keeping VMWS/AFMW principles in mind: addressing the interests of our members and promoting the health and well-being of all Australians, especially women and children.



Our March event, "Postcards from Abroad" will introduce doctors who have had a fascinating range of medical experiences overseas. In May, the "Interview Workshop" will help junior doctors and medical students prepare for medical job interviews. July will bring our Annual Lyceum lunch - a warm and welcome break from Melbourne's chilly winter. In September, our Advocacy event "Canapes for a Cause: Refugee Health and Human Rights issues" will examine this important issue from both health and human rights perspectives. As in the past, we will invite lawyers with an interest in human rights to join us for this meeting.

Last year ended on a high note with Dr Gytha Betheras AM as the Constance Stone speaker at our AGM. This followed the "Let's Talk about Sex" workshop, held in honour of the late Elsie Koadlow OAM, which, beyond being informative, raised concerns about the lack of education about women's sexual difficulties in current medical education.

With one in four adults experiencing sexual difficulties, this is a common problem that needs to be understood by medical practitioners for them to feel comfortable and competent discussing these sensitive issues with patients. It used to be part of the Monash curriculum.

Male sexual difficulties have once more been included in the curriculum as part of men's health issues. Workshop participants felt strongly that, as promoters of women's health, VMWS should endorse reintroduction of teaching about female sexual difficulties to medical courses.

This is the second area VMWS/AFMW have identified in which medical curriculae don't currently address complex issues of importance to women's health and wellbeing. In 2010, as part of the "Happy Healthy Women Not Just Survivors" project, we identified that there is no national curriculum for teaching medical students or doctors about the physical and psychological health consequences of sexual violence. Doctors need to understand the ways patients can be affected over a lifetime to treat them holistically and not inadvertently re-traumatise them.



In both instances, we're talking about sensitising doctors to very human aspects of experience – a traditional part of medicine that a seven minute consultation doesn't provide the space for.

With warm wishes for the new year ahead

Raie Goodwach President VMWS

VMWS Committee 2012

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Ms Zoë Dorevitch Ms Natalie Kew

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VMWS Events 2012

March

Postcards from Abroad

<u> May</u>

Interview Workshop

July

Lyceum Lunch

<u>September</u>

Canapes for a Cause:

Refugee Health &

Human Rights Issues

<u>November</u>

VMWS AGM



On November 26th 2011, the VMWS held its Annual General Meeting at Cabrini Hospital with Dr Gytha Betheras as the Constance Stone speaker. Preceding the AGM, a workshop held in honour and in memory of Dr Elsie Koadlow OAM (1922-2010) took place. Aptly titled the "Let's Talk about Sex Workshop", the afternoon was spent with a series of talks relating to the workshop's theme of sexual health and sex therapy. Open to both members and non-members, and with members of Dr Koadlow's family and several of her past students and colleagues in attendance, there were many warm words and fond memories shared of the woman who pioneered Sex Therapy in Australia.

The speakers, Dr Giselle Solinski, Dr Anita Elias, Dr Wendy Vanselow and Dr Raie Goodwach, spoke about issues ranging from the management of vaginismus to treating male sexual difficulties. Speaking to an audience mostly made up of doctors, psychologists, family therapists and students, the speakers shared their extensive knowledge and clinical experience of working in sexual health and each presentation was an excellent introduction to some of the key issues in this area.

The workshop wrapped up with a "Question and Answer" session that quickly turned into a heated discussion on the minimal level of training in dealing with sexual difficulties provided by our medical schools, and particularly the lack of education students receive regarding matters of female sexual difficulties. In all, the afternoon was a passionate reminder of the continuing importance of this area in medicine and was a tribute to Dr Koadlow, whose commitment to medical education and contribution to the field of sexual difficulties was enormous.







Written by Ms Zoë Dorevitch



Host: Helen Kapalas Australian television news presenter

Guest speakers:

Liz Heliotis - CEO/Co-founder, Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation

Dr Geraldine Goss - Medical Oncologist and Board Member, Ovarian Cancer Reseach Foundation.

Dr Pearly Khaw - Radiation Oncologist, Peter MacCallum

Dr Gillian Mitchell - Director of the Familial Cancer Centre, Peter MacCallum





New date: Monday 27 February, 6.30pm

Melbourne Exhibition Centre

Raising funds for Ovarian Cancer Research

Helen Hatzis – At age 42 Helen Hatzis was diagnosed with Ovarian Cancer. Helen will tell her story of the challenges and confronting chapters of her journey of survival.

Cost: \$40 Members/\$60 Non Members (proceeds from ticket sales will go towards Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation)

To Register: Online www.trybooking.com/15429 or contact AMA Victoria 03 9280 8722

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International aid: contemporary issues and approaches to assistance

Late November last year, a handful of VMWS members (Raie, Ros, Mikhaila and I) attended the Australian Lawyers for Human Rights International Aid seminar. The event was panel based; and featured Mr Tim Costello (CEO- World Vision Australia), Mr Andrew Hewitt (Executive Director- Oxfam) and Dr Susan Harris Rimmer (Manager of Advocacy and Development Practice at AFCID).

These speakers provided us with an overview into Australia's current approach to international aid, and gave us an insight into how events such asthe global economic crisis can put pressure on such efforts.

We look forward to many more interesting events from this group and others in 2012.

Written by Dr Linny Kimly Phuong

Master Module 2012 "Gender Medicine"

Dr Ute Seeland is inviting interest in Master Module 2012 in Gender Medicine.

The aim of this module "Gender Medicine 2012" is to impart knowledge and increase awareness in this novel and important field of medicine.

Internationally renowned experts of Gender Medicine provide comprehensive knowledge on sex and gender specific aspects in seven medical disciplines related to clinical and public health issues and relevant aspects for medical therapy in one short course.

CME points-2.5 ECTS credit points.

Contact: +49 30 450 539 089;

ute.seeland@charite.de

Further Info: http://gender.charite.de/

JUST A QUICK REMINDER...

Applications for a Churchill Fellowship from The Churchill Trust CLOSE on the 29th of February.

What is the Churchill Fellowship?

The Churchill Trust was established in 1965 to honour the memory of Sir Winston Churchill by awarding overseas research Fellowships known as 'Churchill Fellowships'.

Since its inception The Churchill Trust has awarded Churchill Fellowships to over 3,500 Australians who, like Churchill, are innovative, filled with a spirit of determination and possess a strong desire to benefit their community.

Churchill Fellowships allow you to design your own research project, travel the world and further your knowledge in your chosen field, before returning to make a real contribution to Australian society.

So if you...

- are an Australian citizen aged over 18 years
- have a passion for your chosen field and a desire to conduct research overseas
- would like to benefit Australia by sharing your knowledge and experience

...YOU COULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR A CHURCHILL FELLOWSHIP.

Go to http://www.churchilltrust.com.au/ for more information and details on how to apply and you could be heading overseas as soon as the 1st of September 2012, making a difference. So what are you waiting for? Check it out online NOW!



YOUNG MEDICAL WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

The yMWIA is a subcommittee of the Medical Women's International Association (MWIA) consisting of young physicians and medical students. This subcommittee was formed at the 27th International Congress in Ghana that took place in 2007. It was created to address the unique concerns and needs of young physicians and physicians-in-training worldwide. The subcommittee was renewed at this year's 28th International Congress in Germany because even in the year 2010, we are still facing common issues of gender discrimination in training, unequal salaries compared to male colleagues, and fewer promotions to leadership and administrative positions among numerous other subjects reminding us that women have not yet achieved parity in medicine.

To read more and to download the yMWIA biannual newsletter see http://mwia.webtop.de/DocList.htm? cid=242 or check out the facebook page https://www.facebook.com/groups/youngMWIA/

International Women's Day Breakfast 2012

UN Women Australia are hosting the International Women's Day Breakfast 2012 in Melbourne on Monday, March 5th from 7-9 am, to raise funds for programs to provide assistance to women at risk all over the world. The guest speaker is Sally Sara, ABC Afghanistan Correspondent.

Sally Sara is an award winning journalist and foreign correspondent with the ABC. She has reported from more than 30 countries including Iraq, Lebanon and Sierra Leone. Sally has spent the past year covering the news from the frontline of the war in Afghanistan. During her career, she has broken the glass ceiling, as the first female correspondent appointed to the AB C's Africa, South Asia and Kabul bureaus. Sally has written for The New York Times and The Boston Globe and is the author of the best selling biography, 'Gogo Mama.' Sally has been named South Australian Young Journalist of the Year and Queensland Journalist of the Year. She has won United Nations Media Peace Awards and medals at the New York Festival Radio and Television Awards. She has been a finalist in the Walkley Awards for Journalism, six times. Sally grew up in the small town of Port Broughton in South Australia. When she's not reporting, she enjoys running and was a silver medalist at the Australian Masters Athletics Championships. In 2011, Sally was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia for service to journalism and the community.

International Women's Day 2012 is about celebrating the vital role women play in enhancing economic prosperity in their families, communities and countries while recognising that significant barriers to achieving women's economic security and equality continue to exist. UN Women Australia's theme for International Women's Day 2012 is Women's Economic Empowerment. Economic Empowerment recognises that increasing women's access to quality education, meaningful employment, land and other resources

contributes positively to gender inclusion, sustainable development and growth in prosperity.

This International Women's Day UN Women Australia is focusing its fundraising efforts on supporting the Partners Improving Markets program, which is working to make marketplaces safe for women in Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.



Individual tickets and corporate tables are available. For more information or to register online for this must attend event, please visit www.unwomen.org.au or contact the event organisers DKC on 02 8218 2911 or iwd@dkcinternational.com.au

Did you know?

International Women's Day is celebrated on March 8th each year.

Across the globe, 70 per cent of the world's poor are women, women earn less than 10 per cent of the world's wages – but, women do more than two thirds of the world's work.

On average women reinvest 90 per cent of their income into their families while men invest only 30-40 per cent.

In Australia alone, closing the gap between female and male employment will boost Australia's GDP by 11 per cent.

You can lend your support to this year's campaign by donating, buying a purple ribbon, hosting a fundraising event, or attending one of UN Women Australia's International Women's Day events across Australia

References: http://internationalwomensday.org.au/iwd/ Events/vic and www.unwomen.org.au

Call for Nominations WWSF's prize for woman's creativity in rural life

The Women's World Summit Foundation (WWSF) cordially invites you to submit nominations for its 18th annual PRIZE for women's creativity in rural life, honoring creative and courageous women and women's organizations around the world working to improve the quality of life in rural communities. Since inception of the prize program in 1994, 375 Laureates have so far been honored for their commitment and creativity with a cash award of US\$ 1000. – each. All Laureates and their profiles are published on our web site www.woman.ch . A traveling exposition is giving visibility to all prize winners, available at our headquarters.

Given your experience, interest and perspective with regard to issues of development, human



rights, the environment, micro-credit, peace building and empowerment of women and girls, we greatly appreciate your participation and thank you in advance for sending us your candidates. About 10 prizewinners will again be selected in 2012 and announced to the media on 15 October – International Day of rural women.

WWSF wishes to remind you that the United Nations General Assembly (6 November 2007) decided to officially declare 15 October as the International Day of Rural Women, which is the result of 13 years of WWSF lobby work. It is also the Day when Laureates are honored locally and nationally with the WWSF Prize in their respective countries and occasionally some of them are invited to an award ceremony in Geneva, Switzerland. Your nomination(s), following the nomination guidelines, must arrive no later than 30 April 2012 via the post.

Link to guidelines:http://www.woman.ch/index.php?page=nomination-guidelines&hl=en_US



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From the AFMW ...

A Word on Genital Cosmetic Surgery

Dr Glenn Carruthers and Dr Rachel Robbins have recently sponsored a petition directed at The Executive Director Australian Law Reform Commission. It reads:

"For some time we have been concerned that unrealistic depictions of female genitals, as required by the Australian film and literature classification board, have resulted in misperception of oneself as abnormal, leading to emotional problems and an increase in unnecessary and poorly understood cosmetic surgery. Fortunately the current guidelines for the classification of publications in Australia are under



review. This provides us with an opportunity to have a say on some issues in the scheme which are related to these social and health problems. These problems are ably highlighted in the submission by Women's Health Victoria."

The Perfect Vagina is an interesting UK documentary that examines labioplasty, labial casting (to create the Great Wall of Vagina), perceptions of and normal variations of female genitalia, and hymenoplasty.

If you know a woman who has concerns about the appearance of her genitals consider directing her to the Great Wall of Vagina — an artistic display of 400 casted female genitalia showing appearances of all shapes and sizes.

VMWS Newsletter Editors 2012

Dr Claire Steiner
Dr Skye Siskos

Please contact us if you have any feedback, articles, photos or advertisements that you would like to contribute to the newsletter.

PO Box 202 East Melbourne VIC 3002 email: vic@afmw.org.au

- ADVERTISE HERE -

FOR INFORMATION AND ENQUIRIES REGARDING VMWS CLASSIFIEDS PLEASE CONTACT LINNY AT vic@afmw.org.au



Dear Senior VMWS Members,

The VMWS committee would like to extend an invitation to you for a volunteer driver service to any one of our events which happen throughout the year. If you would like to take advantage of this offer please don't hesitate to call

Seniors' Representative, Ros Terry 03 9824 2917.

Warm Regards VMWS committee

The Senate Inquiry into Forced Adoptions

By Dr Raie Goodwach

The Federal Senate will soon report on its Inquiry into Forced Adoptions in Australia from 1940-1980. Because of the extent and nature of the evidence received and the complexity of the issues involved, the report, which was originally due in June 2011, was first extended to Nov 2011 and now will be tabled on 29 Feb 2012. To date there have been over 400 submissions.

Greens Senator Rachel Siewart, The Chair of the Committee, put forward a motion to conduct this inquiry in recognition of the suffering that so many women, their children and families endured as a result of these policies in which young and vulnerable unmarried mothers were pressured to give up their babies. Single mothers were considered sinners for having pre-marital sex and therefore unfit as mothers. They were often treated unsympathetically by medical staff and bureaucrats. There was no financial support for them or their babies at the time.

The "justification" for the policy was that it was in the best interests of the babies so that they could grow up in "better" homes with "better" families. Many adopted children grew up believing their mothers didn't want them. Submissions to the Inquiry detailed how mothers were pressured, deceived, threatened and coerced to sign the adoption papers.

The inquiry came in the wake of campaigns for justice for the Stolen Generation of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people.

The terms of reference of the Inquiry were:

- a) to determine the role, if any, of the Commonwealth Government, its policies and practices in contributing to forced adoptions; and
- b) the potential role of the Commonwealth in developing a national framework to assist

states and territories to address the consequences for the mothers, their families and children who were subject to forced adoption policies.

The Committee obtained evidence from institutions and agencies involved in adoption, as well as detailed evidence from Commonwealth agencies. They looked at archival material from the 50's-70's.

I offered a submission to the Inquiry as I had written a thesis as part of a Masters of Psychoanalytic Studies (1998) entitled "A Psychoanalytic Study of the Feelings of Birthmothers following Reunion with their Adult Children". I hoped the understandings I had come to might be helpful in developing a national framework to assist States & Territories to address the consequences for the mothers, their families & children who were subjected to forced adoption policies.

VMWS/AFMW also offered a submission which congratulated the Government for conducting this Inquiry and supported the need for there to be recognition of the suffering caused by these policies and the way they were put into practice.

The Royal Women's Hospital has issued an apology to these women. This is a start toward healing with its recognition of the initial trauma and its consequences. The report will hopefully make provision for these women to have access to the help they need to deal with this trauma and the ongoing difficulties in their lives.

c)



CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Professor Caroline Taylor, Foundation Chair in Social Justice at Edith Cowen University who was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the Australia Day Honours List for her roles with social welfare organisations as a researcher and to women's studies as an author.

Caroline, who is recognised as one of Australia's leading experts in the fields of child and adult sexual violence, domestic violence, the criminal justice response to victims and social models of trauma and recovery was responsible for the research component of the Happy

Healthy Women Not Just Survivors Project (2010).





Caroline's honour is richly deserved and we look forward to further collaboration with her in this important area.

ALSO...

Three of our former student representatives graduated last year and are now hitting the wards beginning their careers as interns.

Dr Madhura Naidu graduated from Monash University and has started her internship at Southern Health.

Dr Sarah Heynemann graduated from Melbourne University and is

working at the Royal Melbourne Hospital.

Dr Skye Siskos graduated from Deakin University as part of the inaugral class and has started her career at the Austin Hospital.

LAST BUT DEFINITELY NOT LEAST...

A big congratulations to A/Prof. Deb Colville who graduated with a PhD entitled "We need you to be able to do this operation": Continuity and contradiction in the training of ophthalmologists. The citation reads as follows "'How surgeons are trained affects surgical practice and the surgical workforce. This thesis reports a case study identifying how eye surgeons are trained, focussing on the potential to improve the care of chronic eye conditions, and to include women fully as colleagues, arising from changes in forms of training."



MEET THE NEW MEMBERS

DR GEORGINA LYONS - IT OFFICER

Georgina grew up on a cattle stud in the Adelaide Hills and is a basic physician trainee at St. Vincent's Hospital studying parttime for a Masters of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. A passion for women's health and human rights issues recently led Georgina to volunteer with 'Living Positive Kenya' working with HIV positive women in the slums of Ngong, Kenya, which she found challenging but thoroughly enjoyable! Georgina maintains an active role in public health research, having just completed a project with the Skin and Cancer Foundation on occupational dermatitis, and sits on the Deakin University Human Research Ethics board. Outside of the hospital, she plays her electric guitars (somewhat poorly!), enjoys camping, hiking and watersports, and café hops around Melbourne with her family and friends. Georgina is thrilled to join the VMWS committee in 2012!



DR MARISSA DANIELS - TREASURER



Marissa is an intensive care trainee who is currently working towards a PhD in the genetic basis of lung cancer. As a member of VMWS, she has discovered the opportunity to expand her academic interests in the molecular basis of disease and bioethics to explore how these may benefit minority groups and those in resource-limited settings. She is inspired by the extensive collective knowledge and vast experience of the VMWS in addressing issues of local, national and international importance to individuals and communities. Through VMWS she is gaining an understanding of issues facing the international medical community, and how she can contribute in a meaningful way. As a trainee, she has found VMWS to be a source of great support and advice, as well as inspiration. In her spare time, Marissa enjoys playing the violin, running and cooking with fresh food from her garden.

MS DANIELLE RICHMOND - STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE (DEAKIN)

Danielle is currently completing the final year of her medical degree at Deakin University in Geelong. After completing a Bachelor of Science degree at the University of Melbourne, she made the move to Geelong in 2009 and has thoroughly enjoyed her experiences and the many opportunities that she has been offered. Since commencing her medical training she has developed a keen interest in general practise, woman's health and dermatology. She is the current Publications Officer for the Geelong clinical school committee and enjoys the creativity she can express through this role. She is very excited about her new position with VMWS and is keen to both contribute and to learn from those around her.





MS JANE DOAN - STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE (MONASH)

Jane is a Monash University student who in 2012 will be undertaking 4th year medicine with core rotations in women's health, paediatrics, GP and psychology. This is her first year as a member of the VMWS and she is excited to commence in her role as Monash University Student Representative and looking forward to becoming involved in VMWS' projects and attending the great events planned for the year.

During her medical training so far, she has developed interest in the fields of haematology and respiratory medicine and away

from medicine; Jane enjoys spending time with friends and family, discovering new music and planning her next overseas holiday, having just finished a trip through Western Europe.

MS ZOË DOREVITCH - STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE (MELBOURNE)

Zoë is in the final year of her medical degree at the University of Melbourne. As a graduate student, having previously completed an Arts degree also at the University of Melbourne, Zoë has approached her medical studies with an enthusiasm for the philosophical and social issues in medicine. She has just returned from an eye-opening medical elective in Dili, East Timor, which reaffirmed her keen interest in global medicine, with a particular focus on the health and wellbeing of women and children in resource-poor areas. With the hope of meeting like-minded people, she joined the VMWS late last year and is very happy to be a student representative for the University of Melbourne in 2012. She is very much looking to the events and discussions regarding issues facing women in medicine as well as to the many other opportunities that involvement in VMWS will bring.





MS NATALIE KEW - STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE (MELBOURNE)

Natalie is currently a second year student at the University of Melbourne. She is very excited to start clinical school at Footscray Hospital this year. She is excited to be a part of the VMWS committee this year and is especially looking forward to her involvement with "Postcards from Abroad" and "Canapes for a Cause" Having grown up in Darwin she has a strong interest in rural social inequity in health and education. Her current medical interests include research, psychiatry, general practice and obstetrics. Outside of medicine she enjoys travelling, yoga, reading and catching up with family and friends.



The Victorian Medical Women's Society

History

The Victorian Medical Women's Society (VMWS) was founded in 1896 with the aim to further the professional development of medical women by education, research and improvement of professional opportunities. It promotes the health and welfare of all Australians, particularly women and children.

Member Benefits

- * Free attendance at meetings including network dinners, mentoring, quest speakers on topics of clinical or medicosocial importance, and panel discussions.
- Circulation of a bimonthly newsletter with news about events, prizes and gendered socio-political issues.
- * Regular networking and mentoring opportunities.
- * Advice and advocacy.
- * Access to members-only pages on our internet site and details of further net resources.
- Training program application assistance and career development advice.
- Be part of the Medical Women's International Association and have your say in the United Nations and other global forums.

<u>Affiliations</u>

Australian Federation of Medical Women

www.afmw.org.au

The AFMW represents all the Medical Women's Societies of Australia. AFMW arranges conventions and conferences, and is currently focused on developing leadership skills in medical women. AFMW is linked with the Medical Women's International Association.

Medical Women's International Association

www mwia net

MWIA is a United Nations Non-Government Organization. It maintains official working relations with the WHO, the UN Economic and Soical COuncil, and UNICEF. MWIA provides its members with the opportunity to exchange ideas, medically and personally, with colleagues from other nations.

medically and percentally, with concegues from other nations.				
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Dr Deborah Colville	AFMW National Co-ordinator			
	General Committee			
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Dr Jill Tomlinson	General Committee			
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Ms Jane Doan	Student Rep (Monash)			
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5 years	\$680	3 years	\$189
-		5 years	\$297.50
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	` ' '		\$35

Membership fees are not tax deductible as charitable contributions. Membership fees may be deducted as ordinary business expenses. Please consult your accountant for further advice.

Send with cheque or money order to:

Victorian Medical Women's Society Secretariat **PO Box 202**

East Melbourne VIC 3002

Email: vic@afmw.org.au Or direct transfer to:

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*Student members will receive only electronic