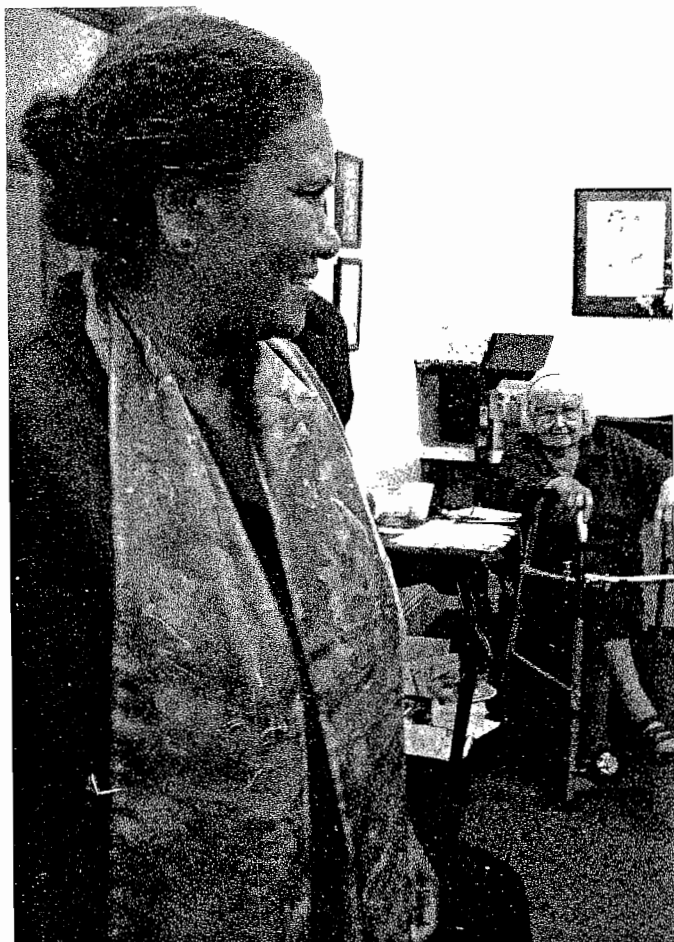


# NEWSLETTER UNAA SA DIV

Issue No.14 Summer Solstice Edition 2010



The United Nations Association of Australia,  
South Australian Division, Inc.,  
wishes to thank

*Sathavy Suos*

for her loyal and longstanding efforts in  
supporting justice and human rights and the  
ideals of the United Nations.

At the Annual Dinner, Oct. 24, Vice Pres't John Crawford outlined the valuable contribution Sathavy made over several years as an Executive Member and as an Office Volunteer.

Memorable were her creative organising efforts to commemorate the various U.N.- designated Days/Weeks/Years. Equally memorable were her creative organising offerings of Cambodian delicacies at these festive functions . . . .

Experiencing tragic family losses in early life made Sathavy very sensitive to the horrors of weapons of war and to human rights violations generally. Consequently she worked tirelessly for the justice that begets peace.

With great regret, the Executive accepted the resignation mid-year of Sathavy Suos, our most respected Member, when yet another tragedy befell her.

(Excerpted from John Crawford's speech)

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SMALLPOX SMASHER ! IS FRANK FENNER OUR GREATEST SCIENTIST?

# Vale Frank Fenner

1914-2010

**FRANK Fenner doesn't engage in the skirmishes of the climate wars. To him, the evidence of global warming is in. Our fate is sealed.** "We're going to become extinct," the eminent scientist says. "Whatever we do now is too late." Fenner is an authority on extinction. The emeritus professor in microbiology at the Australian National University played a leading role in sending one species into oblivion: the variola virus that causes smallpox.

And his work on the myxoma virus suppressed wild rabbit populations on farming land in southeastern Australia in the early 1950s.

He made the comments in an interview at his home in a leafy Canberra suburb. Now 95, he rarely gives interviews. But until recently he went into work each day at the ANU's John Curtin School of Medical Research, of which he was director from 1967 to 1973.

Decades after his official retirement from the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies, which he set up in 1973, he continued a routine established when he was running world-class facilities while conducting research. He'd get to work at 6.30am to spend a couple of hours writing textbooks before the rest of the staff arrived.

Fenner, a fellow of the Australian Academy of Science and of the Royal Society, has received many awards and honours. He has published hundreds of scientific papers and written or co-written 22 books.

His deep understanding of evolution has never diminished his fascination with observing it in the field. That understanding was shaped by studies of every scale, from the molecular level to the ecosystem and planetary levels.

Fenner originally wanted to become a geologist but, on the advice of his father, studied medicine instead, graduating from the University of Adelaide in 1938. He spent his spare time studying skulls with prehistorian Norman Tindale. Soon after graduating, he joined the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps, serving in Egypt and Papua New Guinea. He is credited in part with Australia's victory in New Guinea because of his work to control malaria among the troops.

"That quite changed my interest from looking at skulls to microbiology and virology," he says. But his later research in virology, focusing on pox viruses, took him also into epidemiology and population dynamics, and

he would soon zoom out to view species, including our own, in their ecological context. His biological perspective is also geological. He wrote his first papers on the environment in the early 1970s, when human impact was emerging as a big problem.

He says the Earth has entered the Anthropocene. Although it is not an official epoch on the geological timescale, the Anthropocene is entering scientific terminology. It spans the time since industrialisation, when our species started to rival ice ages and comet impacts in driving the climate on a planetary scale.

Fenner says the real trouble is the population explosion and "unbridled consumption".

The number of Homo sapiens is projected to exceed 6.9 billion this year, according to the UN. With delays in firm action on cutting greenhouse gas emissions, Fenner is pessimistic.

"We'll undergo the same fate as the people on Easter Island," he says. "Climate change is just at the very beginning. But we're seeing remarkable changes in the weather already.

"The Aborigines showed that without science and the production of carbon dioxide and global warming, they could survive for 40,000 or 50,000 years. But the world can't. The human species is likely to go the same way as many of the species that we've seen disappear.

"Homo sapiens will become extinct, perhaps within 100 years," he says. "A lot of other animals will, too. It's an irreversible situation. I think it's too late. I try not to express that because people are trying to do something, but they keep putting it off.

"Mitigation would slow things down a bit, but there are too many people here already."

It's an opinion shared by some scientists but drowned out by the row between climate change sceptics and believers.

In 1980, Fenner had the honour of announcing the global eradication of smallpox to the UN's World Health Assembly. The disease is the only one to have been eradicated.

Thirty years after that occasion, his outlook is vastly different as he contemplates the chaos of a species on the brink of mass extinction.

"As the population keeps growing to seven, eight or nine billion, there will be a lot more wars over food," he says.

"The grandchildren of today's generations will face a much more difficult world."

Extract: The Australian June 16 2010

Two accounts of this troubled territory have reached our desk this week. The first came from Phil Glendenning of Sydney's Edmund Rice Centre who, with co-leader Pat Dodson led an inquiry-party to this Pacific outpost. (Their report will be in the next N-L 21/3/11)

The second was from the ever-busy Felicity Prance mentioned in an earlier N-L as having done an investigative five weeks on Tarawa (Kirib) a couple of months ago. Felicity, while pursuing four projects at Adel. Uni., is preparing to take off mid-Jan 2011 for 3 months deep study of the Kiribati situation. Here is an excerpt from her letter of 29/11 :

*"... I am attempting to develop a health-care project for Tarawa. During my scoping trip I was struck by the poor eye health of the people. A majority suffers from dry eye irritation (the dust!) and almost all of the men have cataracts by the time they are 40, as a result of fishing on the reef all day. No-one has access to sunglasses. This week I am developing a project proposal that I will pitch to all relevant stakeholders. Hopefully they'll be supportive and I'll be able to facilitate the project when I'm on Tarawa next"*

PJF

KIRIBATI AGAIN !

## JOINT FORCE OF HOPE

John Spoehr (in the Adelaide Review) dares to dream . . . politics w/o populism



### ***A hypothetical open letter to Australians from Julia Gillard and Tony Abbott***

Fellow Australians, There are moments in history when we must come together as a nation and reaffirm our humanity - our collective commitment to a just and outward looking Australia - an Australia that welcomes migrants and refugees and celebrates the contribution that they make to the nation. In doing so we enrich ourselves and the world we live in.

As a nation founded on migration, few of us can claim Australia as our ancient ancestral home. We must acknowledge the hardship that colonisation inflicted on our native peoples. Though it took too long, the *Apology* provides a moral foundation for reconciliation. Much more needs to be done in partnership with the first Australians in the coming decades.

Many of our ancestors in this ancient land were the first boat people, arriving on a vast island that had changed little over 40,000 plus years. The parents of your leaders were migrants to this great nation, a nation propelled by the economic social and cultural contribution that they and thousands of others make. Over decades to come we will rely more on immigration to help ease some of the consequences of an aging population. New migrants energise the nation through their skills, hard work and investments. Our commitment to humanitarian and refugee entry is an extension of the mateship that we cherish, extending welcoming hands to those beyond our shores who need our support. We must remember that the boats that approach our land with men women and children in search of refuge do so as a last resort. They flee persecution and hardship. We grant refugee status to about 12000 a year (The vast majority - over 90% - come by air)

The measure of a great nation is not what distinguishes it physically from another, but the recognition within it of a borderless humanity that unites us all. A great nation celebrates the wonders and richness that flows from cultural diversity and extends a welcoming hand to those that come to our land in hope, particularly those seeking to escape fear and persecution.

We must forge a vision for a 21<sup>st</sup> century Australia - for a nation that is ambitious and outward looking, one that mobilises the ingenuity and energy of all to tackle and solve the great challenges that we face. We refuse to succumb to the paralysing politics of fear. We can be more than hopeful of a better future when we confront the challenges before us.

## ISLAMIC VALUES COULD CONTROL BANK GREED

Following the ferment and righteous indignation over the Banks' rate rises, Michael Mullins, Editor of *Eureka Street*, makes this comment : -

One way of getting the banks under control could be to study Islamic banking, which repudiates the principle of charging interest. Instead, under Sharia banking, the bank might enter into a partnership with the home buyer or small business owner, in which they share the profits.

Last year the Vatican's semi-official newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* urged Catholics to take a sympathetic look at Islamic banking: 'The ethical principles on which Islamic finance is based may bring banks closer to their clients and to the true spirit which should mark every financial service.'

Such thinking about banking shares common ground with the Grameen Bank, the microfinance entity that was founded in Bangladesh to make small loans to the poor that require self-discipline rather than collateral.

Liberal Senator Cory Bernardi dismissed Islamic banking in comments he made last week, because 'Sharia or Islamic law is incompatible with Australia's Western values'.

It could well be that he is right, and Islamic banking is indeed incompatible with Western values. But Western values that uphold a banking system that treats its customers with disdain - as the Commonwealth Bank did last week - need to be questioned.

If Australians are not convinced that their banks are looking after them, a study of Sharia banking could lead us to adopt some of its values. This could prove to be as effective in eradicating corporate greed as changes in government regulation.

## United Nations Youth Association (UNYA)

In the midst of her busy time this week at a National Conference in Sydney, The President, Ali Smith, kindly forwarded a comprehensive Report for 2010. Excerpts (only) below :

### Overview

UNYA SA began the 2010 / 2011 year in a strong financial position (**+ new professional sponsorship prospectus**) and an expanding membership base, however, with SA being host to UNYC 2011, divisional capacity and burn out of members is a key concern. Being a smaller division, there is inevitable overlap of members on the Executive and the UNYC Organising Committee, and so individual members have had to take on more responsibilities. From the beginning it was expected that we needed to be prepared to take this into account and be flexible where required.

As a division, we ran a successful Boutros Ghali Shield competition, although this highlighted that further facilitator training is something we need to look into. We are also looking to expand our involvement in Primary School education, through school visits and workshops, as well as online MUN competitions. Our Policy Campaign is well

### Key Achievements

#### a. Expanding to Primary Schools

i. We have made a concerted effort to increase our presence in the community, through our presence at school and community social justice events.

#### b. UNYA includes and interacts with a diverse range of young people

i. As we have in the past, partnered with the UNAA SA, we are looking for funding to provide scholarships to regional students and students from low-income families to attend our State Conference.

#### c. The sustainable expansion of UNYA

i. Both Policy and Social events are organised with one of the main objectives being to attract new members to UNYA.

#### d. Increase/promote collaboration within UNYA and the community

i. Plans to partner with the Combined Peace Group to run a community event for International Peace Day 2011.

#### e. Improved quality of member involvement

i. School's Ambassador Program continues to develop to provide new UNYA SA members with the opportunity to take on a defined role and learn new skills that can be used within UNYA as well as other areas.

#### f. Improved professionalism

i. We hope to run more effective facilitator training sessions that meet a defined national standard in order to run our competitions and conferences in a more professional manner.

We were asked to visit Norton Summit Primary School, a UN Global Peace School. We gave a presentation to the school assembly about the United Nations and youth empowerment, followed by some time with the year sevens, with whom we ran a workshop on our Policy campaign, human trafficking.

Being our first experience with primary school children, it was difficult to know what level of knowledge they had, particularly as we addressed the whole primary school. We were also unsure as to how to approach the issue of human trafficking to year sevens, and what content would and wouldn't be appropriate. It was a real learning experience, and we got lots of valuable feedback from teachers

Ideally, we would have launched our Policy Campaign earlier and run more events by this stage, and that we would have developed a more comprehensive idea of exactly what we hope to achieve from it. Furthermore, I would have liked to make more ground in our regional engagement, as we are yet to run a road trip.

## “COUNTDOWN TO ZERO” It’s coming . . . Watch this Film!

“You don’t get to change the world simply by observing it” Prof. Gareth Evans , former President, International Crisis Group, U.N., & Co-Chair Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament . . . . .

.A public-spirited young Lady, ex-President of UNYA, isn’t just ‘observing.’ She’s out to *change*.

Catriona Standfield gets things done: Not content with having gone to Belgium to meet up with world expert, Hans Blix, Catriona, on her return, set up a series of lectures at the two local Universities entitled “What would Einstein say?” employing expert speakers from politics ,industry. Last week it was the turn of our former Foreign Minister, one of the world authorities on this issue.

Luck : - At the Cold War Cuban Blockade, a US warship engaged in a bit of table thumping, throwing depth-charges willy-nilly over the rail. The shock waves knocked out all communications from a Nuke-armed USSR sub. In such an event, subsequent action is up to the Captain. Serious decision! He call his two Lieutenants. The vote was 2 : 1 . . . . for non action! Several other instances (Bill Clinton losing the code for a month or two!)of near disaster are on the record. The world has been lucky, but it can’t last forever. The only thing to do is to get rid of these 23,000 warheads of which amazingly, over 2000 remain on high alert!

*Verbatim from the Lecture:*      **Next Steps :**

Achieving a nuclear weapons world is not an impossible dream, but it will certainly be an incredibly hard slog. To get there, the critical need is to build and sustain the necessary political will. That has many ingredients, as the Commission spelled out in its report, but the most critical of them will be the right leadership. And that has to come at three different levels: top down, sideways from peers, and bottom up.

The crucial top-down leadership is going to have to come from the US and Russia: holding between them 95 per cent of the world’s nuclear weapons, disarmament is inconceivable unless they lead the way bilaterally. Presidents Obama and Medvedev have made a flying start, but the next two years will be crucial in determining whether that momentum can be maintained.

When it comes to peer group leverage, Australia can play a very important role, as it has in the past on issues like chemical weapons, and in its sponsorship of both the Canberra Commission and the ICNND. What is crucial now is to mobilise like-minded countries around the world to maintain the pressure on all the relevant players to do everything that is necessary to advance the disarmament, non-proliferation and building block agendas I have described.

One way of doing that – on which I am presently pursuing the new government in Canberra (as well as Switzerland and Austria and a number of others) – would be for these countries to support financially the Commission’s proposal to establish, as an ongoing vehicle for analysis, advocacy and pressure, a high profile, independent Global Centre for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament. That Centre would have two distinctive missions – first, to produce an annual score-card which would spell out clear benchmarks for progress, critically monitor how they are being met, and be effective advocates for change; and second to be the international body coordinating worldwide work on crafting a new Nuclear Weapons Convention that would provide a workable framework for ultimate multilateral negotiations.

**GOOD NEWS!**

*This press release from the three pertinent Ministers was warmly welcomed by UNAA (SA) and by ICBL (Landmines campaign group led by Sr. Patricia Pak Poy)*

**Subject: RE: JOINT MCCLELLAND & SMITH & RUDD - INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO BAN CLUSTER MUNITIONS - 27 OCTOBER 2010 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]**

The Criminal Code Amendment (Cluster Munitions Prohibition Bill) 2010 will allow Australia to ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions and will make it an offence to:

- use, develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile, retain or transfer cluster munitions; and
- assist, encourage or induce anyone to undertake these activities.

As part of our commitment to a world free from cluster munitions, the Australian Government signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions in December 2008.

The Convention bans cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians, and establishes a framework for cooperation and assistance that ensures adequate provision of care and rehabilitation for victims, clearance of cluster munitions contaminated areas, risk education and the destruction of stockpiles.

“This Bill will strengthen Australia’s legal framework regarding weapons that cause such significant and indiscriminate damage to civilians, and is a significant step towards ensuring Australia’s law is consistent with this important Convention,” Mr McClelland said.

“The Convention seeks to reduce deaths and injuries from these devices and improve the quality of life for victims and their families.”

Minister for Defence, Stephen Smith welcomed the Bill and said, “the Government will ensure that the doctrine, procedures, rules and directives of the Australian Defence Force are consistent with the Convention, which I was very pleased to sign on behalf of Australia in Oslo in December 2008.”

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Kevin Rudd said the Mine Action Strategy for the Australian aid program 2010-2014 supported efforts to assist victims internationally, as well as efforts to clear and destroy the remnants of cluster munitions in countries that have been affected by their use.

“Australia has pledged \$100 million over five years to reduce the threat and devastating impact of cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war. This is the largest commitment ever made by Australia to mine action.”

**Climigration**      Climate Refugees Fr. Seán McDonagh, SSC

Even though the displacement of people, often on a permanent basis, always appears on any list of the consequences of climate change, little has been done to address their plight. The first assessment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC AR1), stated that the single greatest impact of climate change may well be the mass migration of humans, a phenomenon which is now being called – “climigration.” That Report went on to suggest that by 2050, 150 million people would be displaced by climate change phenomena such as desertification, droughts and water scarcity, rising sea-levels, disappearance of arable land and severe weather events. In other words, people will be forced to leave environments which are no long hospitable for human beings. The iconic examples which have received such media attention are those people living on low lying islands in the Southern Pacific and Indian Ocean. However, the devastation to New Orleans caused by Hurricane Katrina in 2005 is

a reminder that climate-induced migration may not be confined to poorer countries. Of course rich countries, such as the U.S., have the ability to protect such areas unless the severe weather event which only appear once in a hundred years, now happens every few years.



**Numbers involved?**

The Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change published in 2006, estimates that the figure could be as high as 250 million people.[1] Despite these enormous numbers (and others would even project a figure of 500 million climate-induced migrants), these people have yet to receive significant attention at any of the COPs to date. Even if one accepts the 200 million figure, this is ten times the entire population of documented refugees and internally displaced people today.

**Professor, the Honourable Robert Hill, spoke at our United Nations Day Dinner for 2010 at Ming’s Palace Restaurant on 24 October.**

Professor Hill said he had only been President of the United Nations Association of Australia for 12 months. As a retired politician, he followed another ex-politician, John Langmore, who also had personal experience of working at the UN.

Robert was happy to take on the Presidency. He pointed out that the UN Associations have an important role. As the UN is made up of governments, it becomes necessary to give civil society a voice, something that can be done through the UN Association structure e.g. look at the issue of land mines campaigns which started even though governments were completely opposed to a ban on land mines. It is an issue where not every country has banned them - there is still more work to do.

Robert suggested that we look at our own copies of the UN Charter. Its opening phrase *“We the people....”* is supported by people across the world. It is appropriate that today on the 65<sup>th</sup> birthday of the UN we should examine how much we actually know about the UN. To illustrate this he asked some quiz questions, requesting the UNYA representatives present to refrain from answering too eagerly, as they would know all the answers anyway:

**Q1. When it was formed in 1940, how many countries made up the UN?** A wide range of guesses homed in on the correct answer of 50.

**Q2. How many countries are now UN members?** Answer: 192. How did we get up to this number? The process of decolonisation was monitored by the UN over these 65 years

**Q3. How many countries have decolonised under UN supervision over the 65 years?** Answer: 80. Quite an achievement.

A founding principle reason in the founding of the UN was to avoid the scourge of war. Basically there are now no wars occurring between nation states. It is hard to explain why—but where can we attribute this change when wars between nation states had occurred so frequently? The Security Council? The existence of such terrible weapons? There are still conflicts—but when they arise we have an international mechanism to address this.

**Q4. Over this 65 years, how many people have held the position of Secretary General?** The answer is 8. Not very many, but they are elected for a 5 year term, and can stand for re-election. None have held the position for more than 10

years. In the election process the first step is election by the Security Council (which has the usual power of veto).

**Q5. Whose election or re-election was vetoed by the Security Council?** Answer: When Boutros Boutros Ghali was vetoed in the Security Council, they elected Kofi Annan as a compromise candidate, and a very good Secretary General.

But what is the role of the Secretary General? This is much debated—for example, it is not likely to be a “big name” politician who might bring his own political agenda. Roosevelt said the Secretary General was to be a moderator. In discussion about the role it is unlikely to be thought of as electing a person who might rival the politicians who nominate and elect that person. The authority of the office is not clearly spelled out. The big and powerful states try to hold back any authority that might rival their power. One day though it is certainly likely to be a woman. In reality it only has a moral authority e.g. last Friday in Sydney Robert attended the very moving wreath laying ceremony held to commemorate UN Day peace keepers and others who have lost their lives in UN missions. It also celebrates their commitment.

We can look at the agenda of the UN e.g. although on issues of human rights there is still a long way to go, we must recognise that a lot has been achieved. We note the establishment of the International Criminal Court. This is real progress, although not perfect, it has highlighted that impunity is no longer guaranteed. There are a number of very significant cases before the court which show how those who violate human rights can be called to account.

We note with pride that Australia has contributed to over 50 peace keeping initiatives, although there has been a tendency in the UN Peace keeping role for old conflicts to return when the peace keeping force pulls out. This has resulted in an effort to recognise that peace making has become an important parallel function.

AN important development was that the recent 2005 global summit adopted the responsibility to protect. It is an important step forward in ensuring that those in power do not abuse their own people. Also at this summit democracy was endorsed: the global community said “Yes” to the concept of the people having a right to participate in determining their destiny.

The UN has as relevant and important a role as it had 65 years ago. In fact, Robert argues, more so. Without the UN we would be a lot worse off.

Therefore we celebrate that the UN as well as UN supporters like the UNAA will be there to help.

## WE ARE MOVING

At the end of January we are hope to be moving into a new office at 57/81 Carrington Street.

We have signed an agreement and offer to rent the new office, and are awaiting the landlord's acceptance of our offer.

In our city of pubs and churches, this is opposite the Saracen's Head Hotel facing the southern end of Moore Street in which St Mary Magdalene's Church is located. We are still fairly close to public transport, and parking will be much easier.

We have received a most generous offer of support from the State Government to cover the gap between our current rent and the commercial figure we face at new city premises. This assistance is very much appreciated. The office will not be as large as our present room in the Torrens Building, and for the rare occasions when we need a larger room for a function (like our AGM) we will have to look elsewhere for a larger space.

During January we face the need to sort through our accumulated papers and other belongings collected over many years. We will not have room to keep our library and our collection of posters, and we are therefore looking for a body which might be interested in having them. At the same time because library and poster collection are now so rarely (never?) used we cannot afford the increasing cost of storing them. We would welcome constructive suggestions as to who might be able to assist in this regard.

Also there will be quite a lot of furniture which is no longer needed. This includes desks, chairs, tables, filing cabinets, and cupboards. Rather than just dumping it we would be happy to donate them to a worthy cause, or accept a nominal donation to see them find a new home. You can come and have a look during January, although I would suggest you call the office on 8226 4141, or John Crawford (8344 4978) to arrange a convenient time to ensure someone will be there to let you in.

There will be a new telephone and fax number, which we will announce next month when we know what it is. Email will remain the same ([mail@unaasa.org.au](mailto:mail@unaasa.org.au), or John Crawford [johncraw@internode.on.net](mailto:johncraw@internode.on.net)) and these will be available for contact throughout the move.

Our Executive committee face a busy 6 weeks in planning the move, and making sure we have informed everyone about it. Our new outlook from this bright and open office right at street level is going to force us to reassess what we do as the South Australian Division of the United Nations Association of Australia, and while it will be a challenge in many ways, I hope it will also offer an opportunity to improve and widen our service in explaining and supporting the UN.

John Crawford, Acting President 10/12/10

### **"BE UNITED FOR FREEDOM"**

Franciscus Ewing, our West Papuan UNAA Exec Member, was able to tell us at last night's (14/12/10) monthly meeting, of the advances made in setting up a process with Indonesia, mediated by a third (neutral) party, based on peaceful dialogue, for the cessation of injustices to the 'original' people of West Papua. Franciscus had just come from Port Moresby where a landmark Conference was held termed **West Papua Exile Leaders' Meeting** - (Let's Work Together to End the Suffering of our People) This is the most positive development in a long while for the oppressed proud people of this rich territory.

*We shall keep you posted. Full story next edition March 21, 2011 [Ed.]*