



# United Nations Association of Australia, South Australia Planet 3 Digest

## CONTENTS

Heather Southcott AM, 1928—2014	Page 1, 2
Ivan shearer, Human Rights Day 10 December	Page 3
Australia turns its back on a world in need	Page 4
Laura John, Report back, 2014 Aust. Youth Rep. to the UN	Page 5
UN Day Dinner 9 November 2014	Page 6
UNIC Director Chris Woodthorpe at the UN Day Dinner	Page 7, 8
Solar gift for PM.	Page 8
2015 Time for Global Action	Page 8
WA Wheelchair update	Page 9
The Poor have to pay for their Water but the Multinationals Don't!	Page 9
UN Days, Weeks and Years in coming months	Page 9
2015 The International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies	Page 10
Peter Faulkner's Northern safari	Page 10
Environment Notes, Dr Liz Hanna	Page 11
2015 The International Year of Soils	Page 11
Postscript	Page 12

## There will be a Celebration of the Life of Heather Southcott

in

### Scots Church

Corner of North Terrace and Pulteney Street

Adelaide

on

Wednesday 21 January

2.30 pm

## In Memory of Heather Southcott AM 15-11-1928 to 21-11-2014

Heather passed away on the morning of Friday 21 November, just a few days after her 86th birthday.

It is true to say that no one of us who were involved with Heather really appreciated how broad her involvement was across such a wide range of interests, causes and enthusiasms.

There will be a Service to celebrate her life at Scots Church, on the corner of North Terrace and Pulteney Street, Adelaide, on Wednesday January 21st, at 2.30 pm.

At the time of her birth, Scots Church was part of the Scottish Free Church, and Heather was associated with the church throughout her life. For a while she was a Sunday School teacher at Scots. In recent times she has been the person associated with the Scot's congregation for the longest length of time.

Born Heather Miller, she was the daughter of a bank manager and a community minded home maker, and grew up at Rose Park. In her youth she found the Scots Free Church did not discriminate against women and her close involvement with the church allowed her



to develop her talent for organisation and public speaking, even though she said she did not enjoy speaking.

Education was encouraged, and on completion of her schooling at Seymour College she faced a challenging choice. To study pharmacy, or music? She loved music throughout her life, but pharmacy won out and she was one of only four women enrolled in her year at The University of Adelaide. They started the Women's Pharmacy Guild, and used to deliberately set out to annoy the mainly male faculty by taking knitting to lectures.

After graduation when she was working at the repatriation hospital she met Ronald Southcott, a doctor. Because it was a public service position, she had to resign her job on marrying, and she returned to private pharmacy work. She found this allowed her to combine work, family, and her increasing number of outside interests.

She was also involved in numerous organisations while bringing up her children (two daughters), including the National Council of Women, the Women Pharmacists group, and the group set up to establish the Adelaide Women's Memorial Playing Fields. As her children grew older she became associated with even more community and activist organisations. She joined the Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL) and became concerned about indigenous issues through her association with the Presbyterian Church and their connection to the Australian Inland Mission. She was involved in the Electoral Reform Society and worked closely with women who chose to stand in local government elections. She was a serial 'joiner' and said that this was

## Heather Southcott AM 15-11-1928 to 21-11-2014 continued.

the source of her effectiveness as a leader. Networks created opportunities and she 'enjoyed using these networks to put people in touch with one another.' Facilitating is what she did best and the extent of her networks, she says, 'enabled her to see the big picture'.

Robin Millhouse was the first Australian Democrat Member of Parliament in Australia, and in early 1982



he resigned from the seat of Mitcham following his appointment to the Supreme Court. Heather was elected to the South Australian Parliament on 8 May 1982 making her the first female leader of a political party in any Australian parliament. However in the general election later that year she lost by a margin of 70 votes.

As the sole representative of her party in the House of Assembly, she had



Current UNAASA President John Crawford with Heather and Elizabeth Ho at the National UN Year of Quinoa Launch, Government House. 28 June 2013

not found it an easy task. Nobody was willing to help or support her—for example by seconding anything she wished to raise. She found she could be more effective working with community groups to make their work more effective away from parliament.

Natasha Stott Despoja, in her column in the Advertiser paid tribute to Heather (9 December), mentioned the condolence motion debated the week before in the upper house. Natasha said "... her impact on the Democrats and the broader NGO community was extraordinary."

She first became a member of UNAA(SA) in 1978.

In 1983 she joined the UNAA(SA) Executive Committee, becoming President "for a period of 1 year" on 30 May 1984. The 'year' with Heather as President extended to 2012, when health and mobility problems had necessitated a final year of shared presidency.

UNAASA faced a major challenge in 1984 when it became necessary to move to new premises, away from the shared office with UNICEF. Heather's networking skills came to the fore, and we were able to rent the entire first floor at 155 Pirie Street from the Da Costa Trust. A partnership between UNAA-SA, Freedom From Hunger, World Workshop, Amnesty and Development Education Group became the prime tenants renting the whole first floor to like minded NGOs.

A similar crisis arose in 2001 when Da Costa wished to redevelop the building. The core NGO group forming the "One World Collective" on this occasion had to negotiate with the State Government for the move into the Torrens Building in Victoria Square. Heather once again was a key person in the process, calling

not only on her wide networking skills to find the like minded range of NGO tenants, but also her knowledge of Government and its processes to allow a heritage building deemed as being unsuitable for public service use, to be renovated and then rented to the collective.



Heather with UNAASA SoW President Dr Sing Ping Ting at our UN Day Dinner in 2012.

In the condolence motion moved in the House of Assembly on Thursday the fourth of December following her death, Steph Key spoke about how Heather would have reacted to the suggestion that the two commemorative tapestries hanging in the House of Assembly celebrating the 1994 centenary of SA giving women the right to vote and stand for parliament should be moved somewhere else. Having been involved in their creation, Heather would have defended them to ensure they stayed. Steph Key pointed out how tirelessly throughout her life Heather had worked to promote the rights of women.

In 1991, her service to the community was recognised with an Order of Australia medal and, in 2007, she was honoured by UNESCO for her work in human rights and, in particular, her commitment to refugees.

We would like to extend our condolences to her daughters Jane and Anne Marie. Heather was an extraordinary woman, and it has been a great privilege to have known her.

See: <http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/biogs/WLE0711b.htm>



Sathary Suos with Heather at the event celebrating the UN Year of Natural Fibres at the NCW in 2009.

## HUMAN RIGHTS DAY—Public Lecture—December 10th 2014

**Speaker: EMERITUS PROFESSOR IVAN SHEARER AM RFD FAAL at Kathleen Lumley College**

There is an historic (1920) brick building in Geneva called the Palais Wilson. It was originally a hotel of some four stories, and was the headquarters of the League of Nations from 1920 to 1936. It is now home to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

Its work has been based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948.

In 1950 the European Court of human rights was established. The United Nations followed, establishing various committees and bodies that sought to monitor and report on human rights issues.

### CONVENTIONAL MECHANISMS

This began in 1965 with the first international convention. The International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). Arising from this convention there is a committee of independent experts who form the Committee on Racial Discrimination. Since then the UN has adopted a range of 'conventional mechanisms', as part of the covenants and conventions. These include processes to monitor the degree of implementation or compliance.

This range of UN conventions in which various human rights issues are more specifically addressed include—

1966—Civil and political rights the (ICCPR).

1966—The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR—More aspirational than Juridical)

1979—Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

1984—Convention against Torture (CAT). The optional protocol against torture (OPCAT) is the only one Australia has not signed.

1989—Rights of the Child (CRC)

1989—Rights of Migrant Workers (CRMW).

2006—Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

### EXTRA-CONVENTIONAL MECHANISMS

These include the work of the Human Rights Committee that meets in Geneva.

The Human Rights Committee is composed of 18 independent experts who are persons of high moral character and recognized competence in the field of human rights.

They are elected for a term of four years by States parties. Members serve in their personal capacity and may be re-elected if nominated.

Members are from defined world geographic regions. Prof Shearer was one of 18 members of the HRC of whom only three were women. He was elected as part of the Western European and Others group on the Committee.

In the group working in support of the Committee at Palais Wilson there is a wide range of personnel: many are young idealistic interns. Most, but not

all, are lawyers. Also former diplomats figure.

### THE ALL-IMPORTANT "UPR"—UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVUE

Every five years a country is subjected to an "examination of its behaviour" with respect to the above categories.

For example, Australia which always gets an "A" for Peacekeeping will have to front up to tight questions on asylum seekers and indigenous issues, and 'our' responses will be checked 'mid-term'.

North Korea tends to "stonewall" on every criticism, as Justice Kirby found out! Nation-States finding themselves in a tight corner, often invoke the 'coward' word ... "sovereignty". Punishment for non-compliance: publication of the offence to the 'world' is often enough. Sanctions are very difficult to enforce.

Also certain offenders (e.g. USA, Russia, etc.) have the power of veto.

Not all countries manage to submit their reports on time. For example Kenya was 26 years late in submitting its report, only submitting it to avoid a public enquiry in Geneva.

As Professor Shearer said, "It is not perfect, but is better than none at all".

### SPECIFIC INDIVIDUAL APPEALS

Individual citizens also have the right to bring up specific infringements (not as general complaints). They can only do so after they have fully exhausted local remedies. Addressing these specific appeals to the UN is a long process, and can take from two to four years. While a kind of court, there are no public hearings, and the deliberations are all private. It works quite well, and where the facts might be disputed, there can be a to-and-fro process between the complainant and the government concerned to establish the facts of the case, and answer the question "Has there been a violation?". The government is obliged to heed the findings which are publicised (can be seen on the web).

Australia accepts most findings, although with respect to refugee matters for example, politely disagrees. Many complaints come from developed countries like Australia, and Australia has about 100 in the queue at present.

A third important action of the committees is to issue statements and comments on particular aspects concerning human rights.



Professor Ivan Shearer AM, Lidia Moretti, Rosemary McKay and Professor Felix Patrikeeff, Human Rights Day 2014

We thank Kathleen Lumley College for hosting this important HR day event together with the participating organisations, AIIA SA, WILPF SA, Amnesty SA&NT, and UN Youth SA.

## Australia turns its back on a world in need

By Paul Callaghan. This first appeared in Eureka Street, December 2014



An extraordinary gathering of survivors and Catholic leaders occurred last week in Colombo, Sri Lanka, for the 10th anniversary of the Boxing Day Tsunami, the most devastating natural disaster in modern history.

We gathered to commemorate a decade since the Tsunami that killed over 230,000 men, women and children and left many millions displaced and whole communities torn apart.

We listened to the stories of devastation from those who had survived, and we listened to the stories of hope. We also listened to some alarming news from home.

Last week the Australian media reported Julie Bishop's confirmation that Australia's overseas aid program is in line for further budget cuts as the Government seeks to find savings for the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook.

This news is deeply concerning. Between September 2013 and May 2014 our Government cut the aid budget by close to \$8 billion over the next five years. Australia's overseas aid program only makes up 1.3 per cent of the Federal Budget. The 20 per cent of total savings the aid budget absorbed in May was more than a fair share of the budget burden.

Australia prides itself on being a fair country. But how is it fair to have the world's poorest people to shoulder more cuts? As the tenth wealthiest country on earth, this trend damages our reputation and undermines our ability to be taken seriously as a global leader.

It was upsetting for me to hear news of potential cuts to Australia's global compassion while witnessing the successes of Australian aid. There was Faridah, a young woman from a village in the East Coast of Sri Lanka, whom I met with her three children.

Faridah lost her parents and other relatives. Her husband, a fisherman, also disappeared. Faridah's life, stability and support network was destroyed by the Tsunami. She lost all hope for her children's future. Yet, with the support of Australian aid, she was slowly able to re-build her life. Following the Tsunami, Faridah and her children were able to access life-saving assistance in the form of food, water, shelter. She also received psychosocial support on an ongoing basis. Faridah went on to become a community leader and role model. All three of her children are now in school.

Faridah's is just one of the powerful stories of hope made possible with the support of Australian aid.

Australia was the largest per capita contributor to the Tsunami recovery effort. Our Government committed more than \$60 million in immediate emergency relief. This represented the largest peacetime operation Australia has ever undertaken overseas. Australian aid made possible the rapid deployment of emergency health workers, food, clean water and temporary shelter. All of which played a huge role in supporting people and communities to survive and to re-build.

Internationally there is a deep appreciation for Australia's role in providing urgent humanitarian assistance and working in partnership to rebuild families, homes and futures.

It was in this context that the delegates who attended the commemoration expressed surprise and dismay at the proposed further cuts to Australia's overseas aid program. In their eyes,

Australia has developed a reputation as a tremendous actor and leader and one that is so often there during times of crisis.

Delegates questioned why Australia, as the most prosperous country in our region, would now turn its back on the world's poor.

Successive cuts to our overseas aid program mean that we are starting to be seen as a country turning inwards.

Other OECD countries have been far more generous and recognise the importance of steadily growing their overseas aid program. Take for example the United Kingdom; under a Conservative Government the country has steadily increased its overseas aid contribution to an impressive 0.7 per cent of gross national income. Not bad for a country hit hard by the GFC, with greater levels of debt than Australia and with lower levels of per capita income.

Australian aid saves lives. It increases access to healthcare, helps educate children and in times of crises like the Tsunami, helps people like Faridah recover and re-build.

Every year almost two million Australian households donate to the work of Australian aid and development agencies. While Australians reach out to the men, women and children most vulnerable to poverty and natural disasters they expect their government to do the same.

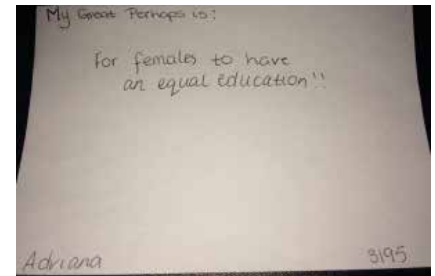
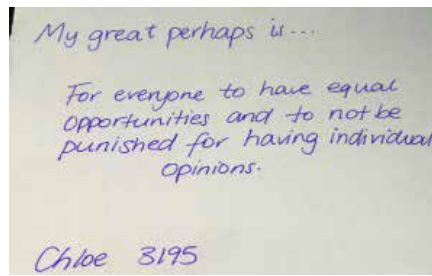
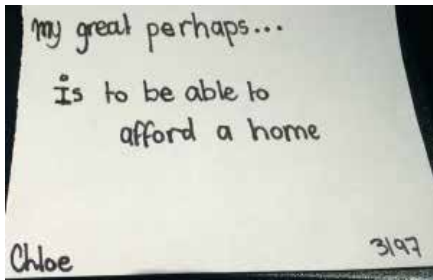
We are surrounded by countries that are better able to tackle the challenges of poverty and natural disasters when our nation plays its rightful role as a leader and a contributor and as a country that sees its future inextricably linked to the future of our region.



Paul O'Callaghan is CEO of Caritas Australia.

Image: Wikimedia Commons

## Report back by Laura John 2014 Australian Youth Representative to the United Nations



Laura spoke at Uni SA on a return visit to Adelaide to report on her experiences as the 2014 Australian Youth Representative

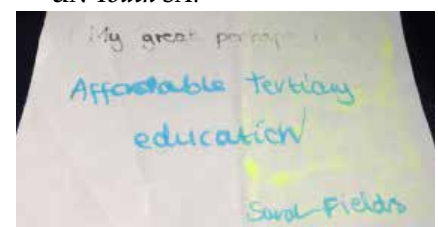
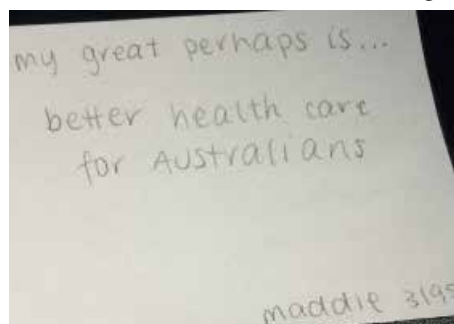
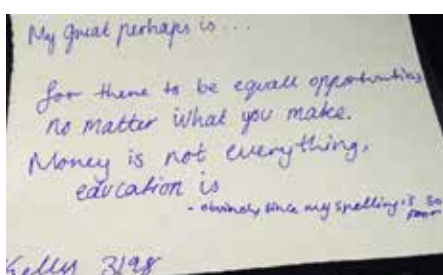
This wrap-up tour of Australia completes an exciting and crazy year for Laura. By mistake she went to the City East campus of Uni SA and after a number of frantic phone calls, arrived just in time and somewhat breathless at City West.

It was an amazing year. She started by touring all around Australia asking young people to name "My Great Perhaps". She asked young Australians to share their biggest dreams for the world - their *Great Perhaps* - so she could share them with our world leaders.

Ranging from backpackers at Tennant Creek to Southern Tasmania schools, talking to young indigenous people, her listening tour was summarised in a list of the ten most important issues that concerned these young people. Their *Great Perhaps* was recorded on cards, providing Laura with some thousand. These enabled her to summarise the top issues in her speech to the UN General Assembly.

These included;

- Education, especially fees that impact on those already disadvantaged.
- Mental Health and the lack of youth specific services.
- The Environment. Conservation



and climate change for the first generation that will see the change, and the last in a position to act.

- Drugs and alcohol.
- Bullying.
- Healthcare.
- Marriage equality.
- Racism.

These were summarised in her 6 minute speech to the General Assembly. She met Ban Ki Moon together with a



wide range of other youth delegates.

Her advice to young people is for them to capitalize on opportunities. *To Dream Big*. She remembers young people in NSW whose biggest dream was for their voice to be heard. In Bunbury where a 15 year old raised money for Syrian refugees with a Fun Run that raised \$10,000 in one afternoon.

Luke was another young person in Bendigo, who asked why a young girl he saw always looked untidy and dishevelled. On getting to know her Luke discovered she was homeless. Finding

homelessness to be a major problem, he set out to raise 100 thousand dollars for "*Homeless in Bendigo*". In 12 months he had raised 500 thousand through music gigs and other activities. Not that these events raised so much, but he was sponsored with such broad support on a dollar for dollar basis. He has now bought land to build crisis accommodation.

Superb examples of young people who dream to be heard.

Laura finished by saying that her three month old niece Zoe keeps reminding her of the saying from the 1970s, that "we do not inherit the world from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children." As the oldest person present it was an inspiring and salutary final message from a brilliant young lady,

more than 50 years my junior.

*John Crawford*

Also speaking at the evening were speakers from:

- YWCA, still going strong after 134 years.
- *Julia Farr Youth* where young people aged 11 – 18 living with disabilities establish a one-on-one mentoring relationship with someone 18 to 30 years who also has a disability.
- *Australian Youth Climate Coalition*. 5 local groups in Adelaide. Walk for Solar supporting the solar initiative at Port Augusta
- *Oaktree Foundation*, fighting poverty, and
- *UN Youth SA*.

## UN Day Dinner, 9 December 2014

### UN Year of Family Farming

It was evident from the start that this was the Year of Family Farming, as guests arrived, they gathered outside in the Wine Centre courtyard on a perfect evening to enjoy an entrée of spit roasted Texel lamb, figs from Willabrand, and prize winning Woodside Cheese Wrights' cheese.

When we moved inside to our tables, the theme continued with our Master



Our guest, Leader of the Opposition, Steven Marshall, with MC Costa Georgiadis, and John Crawford

of Ceremonies, ABC television personality Costa Georgiadis telling us about the importance of the Family Farm before introducing our guest speakers, the recently retired governor of south Australia, Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce, and his wife Liz.

### Kevin and Liz Scarce

Kevin began by saying that he felt he had done enough speaking about his time as Governor of South Australia, and went on to talk about the importance of the family farm together with the significant role they found volunteers were taking as they met as wide a range of people as possible in South Australia.

Acknowledging the presence of Australian farmer of the Year, Robert Green at table 4, he said that farmers really are the bedrock of our state; something he and Liz observed very quickly as they toured South Australia.

**Speakers: Kevin and Liz Scarce,**  
and  
**UN Representative in Australia,**  
**Christopher Woodthorpe,**  
with  
**MC Costa Georgiadis.**

**At the National Wine Centre,  
Cnr of North Terrace and  
Hackney Road, Adelaide.**

This emphasised the great importance of maintaining our ability to feed people into the future. Something that is clearly demonstrated by the statistics showing we are really a nation of small farmers.

In a similar way, as governor, he quickly observed the large number of people in our society prepared to volunteer, and explained that in his role he made a deliberate effort to greatly widen the range of people he saw coming to visit Government House.

Liz then spoke focussing on two aspects of her previous life. The first was the work of volunteers, followed by her involvement with young people.

In their role in Government House they were involved in 800 to 900 event each year. They were patrons of more than 200 organisations.

She was delighted to welcome the volunteers, and see the delight in their faces when they attended for what was more than likely a once in a lifetime special occasion. She hopes they succeeded in making people feel special.

She found working with young people such an important part of the role. This was especially evident when they travelled with students retracing history in Europe. The youngsters did a great job, although occasionally becoming somewhat emotional when locating the graves of their digger ancestors. They had an opportunity to take a sample home—it might have been soil, or a small rock, or another sample, often from farmland.



Speakers, Kevin and Liz Scarce shared the podium

She felt it is a pity that young people are not much recognised in the media, they are the volunteers of the future, and Liz was so very proud of our South Australian youth.

She was delighted that during their term in Government House a Rhodes Scholarship was awarded to a young Aboriginal.

They finished on a positive note. There is no doubt we face difficult times, but the solution is not to increase volumes, or to lower costs and prices, which are no longer competitive, but the future of South Australia should not be dismissed as a government problem. It is actually our problem, and together we can do it.

We wish to thank Kevin and Liz for coming and sharing their thoughts and experiences with us. During their time in Government House they were most supportive of UNAA SA, in many ways. We are most grateful.



The Texel lamb on the spit waiting for our guests to arrive

## Excerpts from the UN Day Dinner speech by Christopher Woodthorpe, Regional Director of the United Nations Information Centre in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Region

It is a great pleasure to be joining you all this evening to celebrate this the 69th birthday of the United Nations and the beginning of our 70th anniversary year.

As we look ahead to the upcoming year, the opportunities that 2015 presents for bringing the countries and people of the world together to decide and embark on new pathways forward are historic and unprecedented. These decisions will determine the global course of action to end poverty, promote prosperity and well-being for all, protect the environment and address climate change. The actions taken in 2015 are expected to result in new sustainable development goals and a new ambitious, legal agreement to address climate change.

Achieving these aims will involve a commitment from Governments, but also from "we the peoples" - in other words, all of us, as individuals or in our communities - which are, after all, the cornerstone of society, and where all these decisions must have relevance. So you all, very much, have a part to play.

It is heartening to see the engagement that has taken place in this community over the past year - and especially through your support of the International Year of Family Farming here in South Australia—a State which has a proud farming heritage.

As we have heard, family farms harmonize all three dimensions of sustainability, the economic, social and environmental, and in the best instances, enable the principles of sustainable stewardship of land to be handed down to succeeding generations. And so as we work towards a better future for all - one where we no longer have 800 million people going hungry every night - family farms will play a central role. This was why the United

Nations called for the International Year—family farms have the potential to confront the challenge of improving our food security, whilst preserving our natural resources.

That potential to make a difference is easy to see when the UN Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that some 90 per cent of holdings are made up of family farmers, in all an estimated 500 million family farms worldwide. The prevalence of family farms in Australia is just as strong, with the National Farmers Federation stating that well over 90 percent of Australian farms are family owned and operated.

But this is not just a case of recognising potential, the Year also recognizes the vital role family farmers currently play by preserving traditional food products, safeguarding the world's agro-biodiversity, contributing to the maintenance of a balanced diet and boosting local economies.

When we take these factors into account, it is not surprising that at the global launch of the Year the Director-General of FAO, Jose Graziano da Silva, said "nothing comes closer to the sustainable food production paradigm than family farming".

Our goal is to bring this paradigm to reality the world over, which is why the Year recognizes the importance of increasing awareness of the contribution of family farmers and understanding of the challenges they face.

Of course, as we have just seen from the video, this has been most imaginatively undertaken through UNAA's collaboration with the surrealist artist Andrew Baines and his art installation in Adelaide's Victoria Square.

How telling that the photos of the event were picked up by major media outlets all around the globe—showing not only the quality and originality of the work, but also how one com-



UN Director Chris Woodthorpe

munity's actions can have a truly global voice.

While Andrew is not with us tonight, I would like to thank him for the memorable and thought provoking installation and also, as you will have seen, for the art on your menu. My thanks also to Aaron Schuppen for producing the video you have just seen, and to Steven Marshall for the blue ties for the shepherds on the day, and Auge who helped with the food and drinks for our celebrity shepherds following the Installation. Also thank you to Charlotte Morley for the Texel lamb from Illawong, together with Colin and Anne Baldock, who were the great facilitators at the installation.

Also Tom Rooney from Waterfind, Josh Lines and his kelpie dog, the Urrbrae Agricultural High School students (All girls!!) for their help on the day, two of whom are here tonight.

UNAA's efforts to support the United Nations did not stop there, and through the year they have covered a wide range of issues, notably:

- The Status of Women, through a film evening and the International Women's Day Breakfast
- Humanitarian work, through a luncheon at Regency to mark the International Day



Guests have arrived in the courtyard in the late afternoon

Christopher Woodthorpe continued on page 8

*Christopher Woodthorpe continued from page 7*

- Recognition and support of the UN Day of Peace
- and, very significantly for the future custodianship of our planet, the Launch of the United Nations Association Young Professionals
- and on Human Rights Day a talk by Professor Ivan Shearer
- The final of the year's discussion evenings will focus on Kiribati.

Its been a busy 12 months, but today, our focus is on the International Year and so let me come to a close by honouring the farmers and providers who have helped make tonight such a wonderful feast. It has been an impressive cooperative venture.

Tonight we have to thank Alistair Brasted and Pat Rix from Tutti. Justin McCarthy of 1882 Wines for supplying the wine on our table. Camillo Crugnale and his chefs who have prepared the delicious dessert we are about to eat. Pam Tobin and the Mushroom Association who helped with an entrée, the Portobello mushrooms in the main course, and the lovely mushroom basket on the silent auction table.

We thank Woodside Cheese Wrights' Kris Lloyd for the great cheeses. We are very lucky to have Kris here tonight as she is soon to leave for London to judge

cheese. We have on our tables beautiful bread from Andy Clappis, the oil is from Urrbrae Agricultural High School, and the apples are from Lenswood Apples, the figs from Willabrand, and the salads from Rainbow Fresh. Thanks to major UNAA SA sponsor Kieran Purcel for his ongoing support from Macquarie Bank.

We thank the Wine Centre for their support as well. And for making it all sound simple when preparing the Menu and organization for this evening. I know how much the organisers appreciated that Thank you Leticia Dunning and chef of the Year Phillip Pope and his team for the terrific food we sampled.

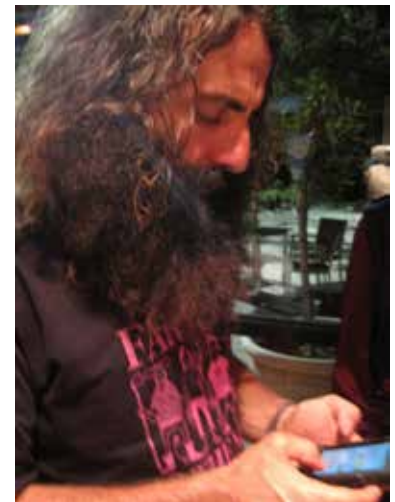
We thank as well all the other very generous sponsors for the Auction Prizes and the raffle.

Also finally thank you to Costa Georgiadis. For your enthusiasm in accepting to join us tonight and coming from such a long way to be with us. I know that many of you are here tonight from the Association and so would like to take this opportunity of also saying thank you to the President, John Crawford and all the members of the Committee of UNAA South Australia for all the hard work to make this such a memorable evening.

And may I thank you all for the sup-

port we have received from you in undertaking our work in the past year and to acknowledge the important role you play in helping to publicize not only the work of the United Nations, but also the issues that are at the heart of our work.

While I cannot make it to South Australia that often, it is heartening to know we have so many supporters here and I look forward to continuing to work closely with you, and especially as we celebrate our anniversary over the next months.



*Costa Georgiadis in his farming T-shirt*

## A SOLAR GIFT FOR THE PRIME MINISTER

I liked this one....

The PM won't get coal from Santa this Christmas – with great irony he'll get solar panels from preachers.

Local church leaders will deliver solar panels to Prime Minister Tony Abbott as a Christmas gift for Kirribilli House <https://twitter.com/Common-GraceAus>

The 12 panels were crowd funded in just four days by Christians who support the existing Renewable Energy Target.

As we all know solar panels need to be professionally installed. Therefore the Solar Council is adding to this gift. We will install Mr Abbott's new solar panels for free.

Taxpayers will love the power bill savings at Kirribilli House...

*By email from John Grimes,  
Australian Solar Council*

## 2015 is the Time for Global Action

The opportunities that 2015 presents for bringing the countries and people of the world together to decide and embark on new pathways forward are historic and unprecedented. These decisions will determine the global course of action to end poverty, promote prosperity and well-being for all, protect the environment and address climate change. The actions made in 2015 are expected to result in new sustainable development goals to follow the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The UN is working with governments, civil society and other partners to build on the momentum generated by the MDGs and carry on with an ambitious post-2015 development agenda.



By 2030 we can end poverty and transform lives while protecting the planet, Secretary-General's synthesis report, *The Road to Dignity* <sup>(1)</sup> by 2030, says. The Secretary-General informally presented an advanced version to UN Member States on 4 December <sup>(2)</sup>. The official report will be available in all six UN languages by 31 December 2014. In early January 2015, the Secretary-General will formally present the report and further discuss it with Member States. #action2015.

<sup>1</sup> [http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5527SR\\_advanceunedited\\_final.pdf](http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5527SR_advanceunedited_final.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/PressRelease\\_synthesisreport\\_final.pdf](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/PressRelease_synthesisreport_final.pdf)



## UPDATE – WHEELCHAIRS FOR KIDS . . . .

Many of our readers expressed interest in this Perth volunteer project.

Here is an update : 29,844 Wheelchairs have now been forwarded FREE to disadvantaged children in 74 countries.

The two leaders – Gordon Hudson and Br Olly Pickett are finalists in the WA section of the Australian of the Year Award (2015)

*Note how the design of the chair has changed over the years: more comfortable, and more convenient to use.*



## THE POOR HAVE TO PAY FOR THEIR WATER BUT THE MULTINATIONALS DON'T!

At a time when water is in short supply around the world, a large multinational is able to take millions of litres of water a year to bottle and distribute it around the world without paying a penny for it – making a huge profit. According to Sum Of US, Nestle draws water from the same aquifer near Hope in British Columbia in western Canada as do many residents who rely on the water. They are concerned. "We have water that is so clean and pure, it's amazing. And then they take it and sell it back to us in plastic bottles," said one resident. This freeloading is even more outrageous at a time when many parts of the world are facing extreme water shortages.

This situation is able to happen be-

cause of the lack of proper regulation in British Columbia. With a growing community outcry, especially with water being extracted during drought periods, the provincial government is considering a public consultation on the issue but without any commitment to taking immediate action. Fortunately, the Council of Canadians and Ecojustice won a tribunal ruling in Ontario so that the water company can no longer extract water during drought conditions. Now the same needs to happen in British Columbia.

The chairman of the water company claimed that "extremist" NGOs are responsible for the idea that water is a human right, and that water should have a market price.

*Source: Email to Peter Faulkner sent by Angus Wong from Sum Of Us*



*Aerial view of the picturesque town of Hope nestled among the Rocky Mountains of British Columbia.*

## INTERNATIONAL DAYS – December 2014 to March 2015

### DECEMBER

- 1 December World AIDS Day —
- 2 December International Day for the Abolition of Slavery —
- 3 December International Day of Persons with Disabilities A/RES/47/3
- 5 December International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development A/RES/40/212
- 5 December World Soil Day [FAO] A/RES/68/232
- 7 December International Civil Aviation Day [ICAO] A/RES/51/33
- 9 December International Anti-Corruption Day A/RES/58/4
- 10 December Human Rights Day A/RES/423 (V)
- 11 December International Mountain Day A/RES/57/245
- 18 December International Migrants Day A/RES/55/93
- 20 December International Human Solidarity Day A/RES/60/209

### JANUARY 2015

- 27 January International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust A/RES/60/7

### FEBRUARY

- 4 February World Cancer Day —
- 6 February International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation A/RES/67/146
- 13 February World Radio Day [UNESCO] —
- 20 February World Day of Social Justice A/RES/62/10
- 21 February International Mother Language Day [UNESCO] A/RES/56/262 30C/62

### MARCH

- 1 March Zero Discrimination Day [UNAIDS] —
- 3 March World Wildlife Day A/RES/68/205
- 8 March International Women's Day —

- 20 March International Day of Happiness A/RES/66/281
- 21 March International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination A/RES/2142 (XXI)
- 21 March World Poetry Day [UNESCO] —
- 21 March International Day of Nowruz A/RES/64/253
- 21 March World Down Syndrome Day A/RES/66/149 draft A/C.3/66/L.27
- 21 March International Day of Forests and the Tree A/RES/67/200
- 22 March World Water Day A/RES/47/193
- 23 March World Meteorological Day [WMO] WMO/EC-XII/Res.6
- 24 March World Tuberculosis Day [WHO] WMO/EC-XII/Res.6
- 24 March International Day for the Right to the Truth concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims A/RES/65/196
- 25 March International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade A/RES/62/122
- 25 March International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members —

### INTERNATIONAL WEEKS 2015

- 1–7 February (First week of February) World Interfaith Harmony Week A/RES/65/5
- 21–27 March Week of Solidarity with the Peoples Struggling against Racism and Racial Discrimination A/RES/34/24
- 23–29 April 2007 UN Global Road Safety Week A/RES/60/5
- 25–31 May Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories A/RES/54/91
- 1–7 August World Breastfeeding Week [WHO]
- 4–10 October World Space Week A/RES/54/68
- 24–30 October Disarmament Week A/RES/S-10/2, p. 102
- 11–17 November International Week of Science and Peace

A/RES/43/61 (The week in which 11 November falls)

### INTERNATIONAL YEARS 2015

- International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies A/RES/68/221
- International Year of Soils [FAO] A/RES/68/232

### INTERNATIONAL DECADES

- 2015–2024 International Decade for People of African Descent A/RES/68/237
- 2014–2024 United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All A/RES/67/215
- 2011–2020 Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism A/RES/65/119
- United Nations Decade on Biodiversity A/RES/65/161
- Decade of Action for Road Safety A/RES/64/255
- 2010–2020 United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification A/RES/62/195
- 2008–2017 Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty A/RES/62/205
- 2006–2016 Decade of Recovery and Sustainable Development of the Affected Regions (third decade after the Chernobyl disaster) A/RES/62/9
- 2005–2015 International Decade for Action, "Water for Life" A/RES/58/217

From <http://www.un.org/en/events/observances/index.shtml>

*Note: The A/RES/nn/nnn references refer to the UN resolution establishing the Day etc. The full resolution can be found by an internet search for that number.*

## THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF LIGHT AND LIGHT-BASED TECHNOLOGIES

“Light gives us life through photosynthesis, lets us see back in time towards that cosmic big bang, and helps us communicate with the other sentient beings here on Earth. The optics and photonics technologies developed for space exploration have rendered many valuable spin-off applications in everyday life.”

*John Maher (Nobel Prize 2006)*



**Internet use by population**  
**75% in Europe**  
**16% in Africa**

**Study after sunset is not possible in many developing countries**

### INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF LIGHT 2015

“Civilization would not exist without light; light from our Sun and light from the focused and coherent lasers which now have become an important part of our daily lives. The International Year of Light will surely raise awareness of these powerful discoveries and their present wide-ranging, light-based technologies which are significant contributors to the world market. As importantly, the International Year of Light will inspire future discoveries and applications for one of the most important elements of our existence: light.”

*Ahmed Zewail (Nobel Prize 1999)*

The applications of light science and technology are vital for existing and future advances in, inter alia, medicine, energy, information and communications, fibre optics, agriculture, mining, astronomy, architecture, archaeology, entertainment, art and culture, as well as many other industries and services, and that light-based technologies contribute to the fulfilment of internationally agreed development goals, including by providing access to information and increasing societal health and well-being.

The celebration of the anniversaries of these discoveries in 2015 provides an important opportunity to highlight the continuous nature of scientific discovery in different contexts, with particular emphasis on women’s empowerment in the science sector and on promoting science education among young people, especially in developing countries

#### 2015 coincides with the anniversaries of a series of important milestones in the history of the science of light, including

- the works on optics by Ibn Al-Haytham in 1015,
- the notion of light as a wave proposed by Fresnel in 1815,
- the electromagnetic theory of light propagation proposed by Maxwell in 1865,
- Einstein’s theory of the photoelectric effect in 1905 and of the embedding and of the embedding of light in cosmology through general relativity in 1915,
- the discovery of the cosmic microwave background by Penzias and Wilson and Kao’s achievements concerning the transmission of light in fibres for optical communication, both in 1965,

### NORTHERN SAFARI

(aka “Creation and Reconciliation Pilgrimage”)

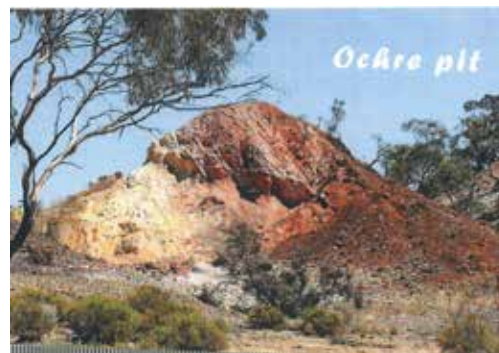
In the 2nd week of October I accompanied 23 others from all States of Australia to the Northern Flinders—think Leigh Creek and 80 km East.

At Iga Warta we were hosted by the Aboriginal Community-Elder, Terry Coulthard.



Terry Coulthard

The expedition was led by Ms Jacqui Remond, Director of Catholic Earthcare Aust. and Prof Norm Habel of Finders Uni. The purpose: to utilise the South African (after Mandela) reconciliation methods in our interaction with the indigenes ; to learn something of their culture; to be trusted with some of the more secret customs and practices of the Adnyamathanha People; to visit places of significance—cultural and geological. For example, after a few days, when trust had been established, the Group was taken to the Ochre Pit, and we were ‘signed’ with the five colours - white, yellow, red, purple and orange - each with its own meaning which the recipient is meant to strive towards. White (invisible) signifies spiritual connection to Mother Earth. Not quite “into the tribe” initiation, but the next best thing: real acceptance. Evening Campfire storytelling was rich, as was the music. Visits to Painting and Artifact sites, and explanations by Dr Denis Edwards and Norm Habel situating the



Cosmic Story and Scripture enriched us participants.

We came home via Chambers Gorge to Blinman ; “did” the world-famous Brachina Gorge, Wilpena Pound, and the “Golden Spike”, staying o’night at Willow Springs Station. Further calls at Augusta and Pirie (St Marks, o’night) allowed us to see impressive work done by Aboriginal educators.

**Peter Faulkner**

*Peter is our UNAASA Environment Officer. He will tell up about his love of the Flinders Ranges, its people, its spirituality and its geology at our coming March 19 Discussion Evening.*

## ENVIRONMENT NOTES

*Dr Liz Hanna, Director, Australian University, National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health*

*Dr Liz Hanna comments on the seriousness of climate change ...*



### *One in a Thousand Heat Extremes.*

At less than one degree of warming, many parts of the world are seeing 1 in 1000 heat extremes. Surpassing human thermal tolerance, the European and Russian heat waves killed 125 000 people. To think that two degrees of warming is safe is tantamount to signing the death warrant of millions. Global warming is already cooking people, plants and stock, and dangerously heating the oceans. Humanity cannot survive heat extremes. Heat affected food systems reduces yield, and increases the proportion of the global hungry, making them even more prone to disease. History teaches us that mass hunger causes social disruption, migration and conflict. Climate change directly and indirectly harms human health. Hundreds of thousands have already succumbed. No longer can wealthy countries disregard the life of others as they selfishly cling to fossil fuelled lifestyles. We have the technology, and we know it makes economic sense to avert further global warming.

As a footnote, it should be noted that poor nations are going for solar and wind at twice the rate of rich ones according to a recent report in the Sydney Morning Herald.

### *10th Anniversary of the Ningaloo Reef Marine Sanctuary*

November marked the 10th Anniversary of the Ningaloo Reef Marine Sanctuary in Western Australia. Ningaloo is UNESCO World Heritage listed. It is also a decade since Australia became a global leader in marine protection when a third of the Great Barrier Reef was safeguarded against exploitation. Despite the many threats that the Great Barrier Reef is currently facing, it is quite clear that both reefs represent an environmental, social and economic success. They are tourism powerhouses, local communities have thrived around them, and science research has documented the benefits they produce for our oceans and marine life, including dugongs, whale sharks, turtles and dolphins.



*An aerial view of the Western Australian Coastline near Exmouth Gulf in the vicinity of Ningaloo Reef Marine Sanctuary*

Research has established that coral reefs protected in sanctuaries are six times more resistant to disease and also climate change that reefs elsewhere. A recent Catalyst program presented new research that shows that half of the young fish on the Great Barrier Reef are coming from the third that is protected as a sanctuary.

Along with the research being conducted, it is the local communities that provide the best insight into the impact and also the benefits of sanctuaries. The ground-breaking sanctuaries at Ningaloo and the Great Barrier Reef, as well as Australia's new national network of sanctuaries are the result of a decade of community activity.

*These comments come from a letter to the UNAA SA environmental representative, Peter Faulkner from Michelle Grady of Save Our Marine Life.*



*Whale shark considered a vulnerable species by ICUN (the International Union for the Conservation of Nature)*



2015  
International  
Year of Soils

The IYS 2015 aims to increase awareness and understanding of the importance of soil for food security and essential ecosystem functions.

The specific objectives of the IYS 2015 are to:

- Raise full awareness among civil society and decision makers about the profound importance of soil for human life;
- Educate the public about the crucial role soil plays in food security, climate change adaptation and mitigation, essential ecosystem services, poverty alleviation and sustainable development;
- Support effective policies and actions for the sustainable management and protection of soil resources;

- Promote investment in sustainable soil management activities to develop and maintain healthy soils for different land users and population groups;
- Strengthen initiatives in connection with the SDG process (Sustainable Development Goals) and Post-2015 agenda;
- Advocate for rapid capacity enhancement for soil information collection and monitoring at all levels (global, regional and national).

## POSTSCRIPT

### Heather Southcott

I must acknowledge how important Heather's contribution has been over so many years. Her networking skills, and experience of the non-profit sector as well as the workings of government at both state and federal levels was amazing.

Recently, even as her health has failed over these past few years she has continued to keep in contact. She was busy on the telephone, had a somewhat frustrating fight with her computer and email (she invariably seemed to win—eventually), and more recently her taxi driver whose role was to endeavour to bring her to within a few metres of the office door.

There will be a *Celebration of the Life of Heather Southcott* at *Scots Church*, the church she attended and served since her infancy. It will be at **2.30 pm on Wednesday 21st January**. See the notice on Page 1.

I was thinking of saying "we are going to miss her". Of course we will. We already miss her involvement, her detailed knowledge of the UN, and the contact she had with the wide range of friends right across the NGO scene, not only here in South Australia, but nationally as well. I am afraid I feel stuck for words. I can only say to her daughters, Jane and Anne Marie, that it is only now I appreciate what amazing parents they had. In offering them our condolences we recognize how much we will remember Heather's amazing contribution for many years to come. Especially for UNAA, and for the SoW Committee.

### UN Day Dinner

The story of our dinner is elsewhere in this newsletter.

May I thank our speakers, Kevin and Liz Scarce; while no longer at Government House they still have such a positive and relevant message for us.

Also Christopher Woodthorpe, the Regional Director of the United Nations Information Centre in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Region who came from Canberra to join us to celebrate the United Nations International Year of Family Farming. As he pointed out, 24 October 2014 was the 69th birthday of the United Nations, making next year 2015 a very special United Nations anniversary.

I would like to record my thanks not only to all those who worked so hard to make the evening so enjoyable and such a success, but also to thank our numerous donors who were so generous for our food, for the financial help,

and for the silent auction and raffle.

A special item planned for the evening was to have been an operatic aria sung by Alistair Brasted from Tutti. He sang so brilliantly earlier in the year at our Humanitarian Day luncheon, when Tutti were our guests are Regency. Unfortunately Alistair and Pat Rix were both ill, and were forced to cancel at short notice.

As our only fund raising event the Dinner is very important in the contribution it makes for our financial viability in the coming year.

### Discussion Evening

At the final discussion evening for the year on 18 November Paul Fotkou came to tell us how Felicity Prance's project is providing spectacles in a thoroughly professional way to islanders on Kiribati. It is making such a difference. Thank you Paul, I hope we can work together to help promote your organisation as it becomes more widely known.

### Laura John UN Youth Representative 2014

On 20 November Hayley Johnson, SA President for UN Youth welcomed Laura John, Australia's United Nations 2014 Youth Representative, back to Adelaide to report on her visit to New York. Laura said her appearance on the ABC Q&A programme was much more stressful than speaking in the UN General Assembly.

Her story was inspiring, and she was supported by other young people who work helping others here in South Australia.

### Beerenberg

Unfortunately very inclement weather forced us to cancel the planned strawberry picking morning for charity on 22 November. Maybe we will find a suitable date in the New Year.

### Hieu Van Le

A farewell event from the Multicultural Community was held on Wednesday 26 November to say thank you to Hieu Van Le. Musical items and speeches told how inspiring Hieu and Mrs Ian Le's story has been. We offer our thanks for their immense contribution to our state.

### Human Rights Day Lecture

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will see a report on the talk by Professor Ivan Shearer. He was for eight years a member of The United Nations Human Rights Committee, working in Geneva and New York. We thank him for his talk.

### New UNAA executive director

We would like to welcome the new Executive Director of the UNAA, Matthew Kronburg. We are looking forward to working with him to promote the UNAA around Australia.

Also we offer our thanks to our outgoing Executive Director Beth Shaw.

### Discussion evenings 2015

We have found the bimonthly discussion evening to be most helpful. We will miss January in the New Year feeling we deserve a holiday, but we have booked Peter Faulkner, our Environment Officer to tell us about his great enthusiasm for the Flinders Ranges, highlighting his interest in spirituality, geology and chemistry. This will be on 20 March at 5.30 pm.

I recently learnt that in 1944, the Tasmanian Government gave the League of Nations Union (this was before the change of name to UNAA in 1945) a grant to help pay running expenses. This allowed the public to participate in weekly forums to be held on international affairs. To hold them weekly must have been a challenge.

### The New Year

I would like to wish everyone a very happy festive season, and express the hope that 2015 will bring an atmosphere of peace and reconciliation.

After such a busy 2014 I hope the Christmas season will offer a time for rest and recuperation. Although in the odd spare moment maybe we could apply our mind to thinking about what we might do in support of the United Nations for the rest of the year.

What might be in store for UNAA SA? What might we do?

We face the International Year of Soils, as well as the Year of Light and Light based Technologies.

The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have a target date of 2015, and are being reviewed aiming at an ambitious post2015 agenda.

There are not only the International Years, but also the Weeks, like Children's Week, and the Days including World Humanitarian Day.

Which means that when we start again after our hopefully restful January we will begin planning for 2015—may I invite our members and friends to offer their thoughts and suggestions for what we might do during this coming year.

*John Crawford, President, December 2014,  
phone: 8344 4978  
email: pres@unaasa.org.au.*

*Our office will be closed from Friday 19 December through to Monday 12 January. We can be contacted at the above phone number and email address.*