

THE SAWAN



SAWA-Australia
SUPPORT ASSOCIATION FOR THE WOMEN OF AFGHANISTAN

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 1. FEBRUARY 2004

Published by SAWA-Australia Support Association for the Women of Afghanistan.
Articles have been accepted in good faith, if you have any queries please contact the authors



www.sawa.australia.org
info@sawa-australia.org

SAWA OBJECTIVES

1. Raise funds for RAWA projects
2. Support RAWA
3. Increase community awareness of the forgotten needs of Afghan women
4. Encourage women, men and young people to join SAWA-Australia.
5. Set up SAWA branches throughout Australia

WHAT IS SAWA-AUSTRALIA?

An Australian woman called Shana Rowe read a disturbing book about Afghan women and was so moved by it that she decided she had to do something to help. She phoned me and discussed what to do. Two days later I had a call from Onnie Wilson in Melbourne to say that Tahmeena, Faryal a young Afghan woman would be visiting Australia in August. 2003. So with the support of a small group of people in Central Victoria, and others in Sydney and Melbourne, we decided to create SAWA-Australia. Previous efforts in Melbourne and Sydney, while not formalised, had a strong influence on the shape of the new organisation.

Providence or what you may call it, also played a major role.

Subsequently a meeting was held with Tahmeena in Newstead, Victoria and soon there was enough enthusiasm to go forward. Tahmeena had a very successful second visit here and was loved by everyone who either met or heard her speak. Thanks to Tahmeena's encouragement, SAWA was born.

SAWA-Australia now has a web page and supporters in three states.

SAWA-Australia is dedicated to raising funds for human rights, education, nutrition, health, safety, and self esteem of the millions of Afghan women and children in Pakistan refugee camps and within Afghanistan.

We decided that the best way for Australians to help Afghan women, was to work with an existing NGO (Non Government Organisation) in Afghanistan/Pakistan. RAWA was the obvious choice. Hence the major SAWA

objective is to raise funds for RAWA projects and to support RAWA in the best way we can.

Awareness must also be raised in the general Australian community, of the dire needs of Afghan women, boys and girls. Most Afghan women and girls have missed out on all levels of education since 1979. It is extremely important that these women and children, many born in refugee camps, are firstly fed and given homes and health services, and then given the opportunity to be educated and take their proper places in the administration and life of Afghanistan in 2004 and beyond.

Australians take for granted health, housing, water, sanitation, education, electricity, telephones, theatres, the Internet, roads, transport, freedom of association and so on. But most Afghans, particularly women have none of this, not even the basics of clean water, sanitation and homes.

In this, SAWA's first quarterly newsletter, Australians are being asked to think deeply about where the world is heading; about why world poverty has not been eradicated and seems to be on the increase; about why their governments at all levels are not trying to do something to help; about why humans can reach the Moon and Mars and yet there are 2.4 billion without sanitation; about why after 100 years of woman's "emancipation", women still have only 12% of the decision making positions in the world; about why some countries are still placing millions of landmines, killing thousands of children annually. And so it goes on and on.

Please take up this offer to help

Do something no matter how small, today.

Grace McCaughey Convener

ABOUT RAWA

RAWA is the oldest social/political organization of Afghan women in Afghanistan. It struggles for peace, freedom, democracy and women's rights in the fundamentalism-blighted country. The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan, was established in Kabul, Afghanistan, in 1977 as an independent organization of Afghan women fighting for human rights and for social justice in Afghanistan. The founders were Afghan woman intellectuals under the sagacious leadership of Meena who in 1987 aged 30, was assassinated in Quetta, Pakistan, by Afghan agents of the then KGB, in connivance with the fundamentalist band of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

RAWA's objective was to involve an increasing number of Afghan women in social and political activities aimed at acquiring women's human rights and contributing to the struggle for the establishment of a government based on democratic and secular values in Afghanistan. Despite the suffocating political atmosphere, RAWA very soon became involved in widespread activities in different socio-political arenas including education, health and micro income generation as well as political agitation.

RAWA and its philosophy is the future of Afghanistan. RAWA needs our help to achieve more. www.rawa.org

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SAWA EXCITED BY AFGHAN VISIT

Mariam Rawi will be on tour in Australia during April and May this year. Mariam, a long time RAWA member, has been invited by Deakin University as a keynote speaker for their innovative conference "Community Development, Human Rights and the Grassroots"
:<http://www.deakin.edu.au/cchr>
to be held at the YWCA Melbourne, April 14 -18.

Whilst in Melbourne, Mariam will present the prestigious Mornington Peninsula Shire's 'Annual Human Rights Oration' to be held in conjunction with Toorak College, Mt Eliza, at the College, 10 am on April 22nd.

The news of Mariam's impending visit has spread fast and groups keen to show support for Mariam and RAWA have been both considerable and far spread. Further events are being planned in Melbourne, Castlemaine, Bendigo,

Canberra, Townsville and Sydney involving SAWA, RAWA Supporters of Melbourne, Coalition for a Feminist Agenda, Business and Professional Women, Korowa Anglican Girls' School, LaTrobe University, the Victorian Trades Hall Council, Victorian women parliamentarians and RMIT.

Details of public events will be posted on the SAWA web site but additional inquiries can be made by contacting Onnie on (03) 9822 8858

See Mariam's itinerary later in newsletter.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Tues Feb 3 Committee meeting Five Flags 6.30 pm. 03 5476 2457

Tues Feb 10 7.30 Film - Castlemaine

Mon March 8 IWD Victory Park Castlemaine

Thurs March 11 Women's Health Day. UC Hall Castlemaine.

Fri March 10. Annual General Meeting. Castlemaine

Fri April 23 Miriam Rawi Latrobe University Bendigo campus at 12.30 pm.

Dr Katherine Legge: 03 5444 7393
k.legge@bendigo.latrobe.edu.au

See full Australian itinerary elsewhere.

Friday April 24 Concert Castlemaine
Contact Jacqui Turnbull 03 5474 3005

jacqui.turnbull@castlemaine.net.au

EVENT DETAILS

Tuesday Feb 10. Film "In This World"
Castlemaine Theatre Royal.

Winner Best Film

German International Film Festival

**"Extraordinary! Striking!
Daring! Ambitious!"**

**Speaker Daphne Milwood,
Yorta Yorta Woman on
The Afghan Connection"**

Tickets \$15/\$12: Jacqui 03 5474 3005.

Grace 03 5476.2457/ Ellen 03 5470 6867
or at Theatre Royal on the night

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IWD Events in Australia

<http://women.gov.au/event/list.asp?month=3&year=2004> or

<http://feministpeacenet.org/australia2004.htm>

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SUPPORT FOR SAWA

Letter from RAWA

Dearest Grace, congratulations for establishment of SAWA. And accept our love and regards for your kind and sisterly efforts to help your suffering Afghan sisters. We are proud of you and other RAWA supporters in Australia for what you are doing for us.

We will send your newsletter to RAWA's mailing list of over 18,000 members as soon as it is received. Heartfelt thanks once again for your sympathies and hard work. Hugs, Mehmooda

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LETTER FROM CANADA

I am so pleased to 'meet' you and to welcome your efforts in support of Afghan women. We are thrilled to learn there is work being done from Australia as we have often had individuals inquiring about linking up with others in Australia. I'll be sure to send them your way should we have more inquiries. We are thrilled to have a number of chapters across Canada and these range from one-person to groups of 10-20 members. We are linked together by a CW4W Afghan email list and work in solidarity with these chapters and affiliated groups in Canada, sharing resources, ideas, advocacy actions, etc. We hope to have our first-ever annual general meeting and conference in the Fall of 2004.

We encourage our new chapters to meet together as a group and discuss what areas they feel are most important to them and how they want to actively participate in supporting our mutual goals and objectives. Some chapters focus on advocacy, most focus on fundraising. Our board at the National Office in Calgary helps to coordinate advocacy efforts and funnels the monies raised from our various chapters to our partners in Afghanistan. Once again congratulations on your initiatives in Australia and please let us know if we can support you in any way. In solidarity.

Janice Eisenhauer
National Coordinator Canadian Women for Women Afghanistan:
www.w4wafghan.ca

Letter from Anne Brodsky

Congratulations and best wishes to Support Association for the Women of Afghanistan in taking on the important work of supporting RAWA and the women of Afghanistan. While it is saddening that much of the world has been misled into thinking that Afghan women could and have been liberated by bombs and the replacement of Taliban fundamentalists with Northern Alliance fundamentalists, it is hopeful to know that caring people in Australia and around the world continue to organize and work for the betterment of their Afghan sisters.

Please continue to support RAWA and the women of Afghanistan as they struggle to create better lives for themselves and all their country people.

In peace and solidarity,
Anne Brodsky, Ph.D. Author of

**With All Our Strength:
The Revolutionary Association of the
Women of Afghanistan.** Routledge

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OTHER BOOKS ON AFGHAN WOMEN

**Meena - Heroine of Afghanistan -
The Martyr who founded RAWA** by
Melody Ermachild Chavis

**Zoya's Story: An Afghan Woman's
Battle for Freedom** by Zoya with John
Follain and Rita Cristofari

**Veiled Courage: Inside the Afghan
Women's Resistance** by Cheryl
Benard with Edit Schlaffer.

All available from the RAWA web page:
www.rawa.org or your local book store

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WANTED

Dr Nonja Peters from Curtin University in West Australia said recently:...."before the Taliban, the University of Kabaul had 220,000 books, it now has 500. Computers, also, are desperately needed," she said.

Dr Peters is seeking ways in which the public can assist with restocking of the libraries. She would welcome assistance and can be contacted on 08 9266 4766
N.Peters@curtin.edu.au

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**Copies of the SAWA Constitution
are available on request.**

HOW TO SUPPORT SAWA

SAWA-Australia offers you the opportunity to give support. There are various means of doing this. Those wishing to subscribe or send donations, and who use Internet banking, may transfer funds to the SAWA account:

**Account Name: SAWA-Australia
Bendigo Bank Castlemaine Branch
BSB: 633-000 Acc. No: 120800610**

Please confirm your e-contribution by emailing info@sawa-australia.org with your details. We will send a receipt. Until secure online payments by credit card are operational, please fill in the form and send it with your cheque or money order made out to SAWA-Australia :



Name:.....
 Organisation:
 Address:.....
 Post Code.....Phone:().....
 Email:
 Web page:.....
 I support the objectives of SAWA
 Signed:.....
 Dated:.....
 (circle as appropriate):

Organisations:	\$100
Foundation Subscription	\$ 50
Individual	\$ 20
Concession	\$ 10
Student	\$ 5
School	\$10
Donation	\$.....
Total	\$.....

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TO MAKE A BEQUEST

You may decide to leave something in your will to SAWA-Australia. It is a wonderful opportunity to make a lasting gift to people in need, as well as to an organization you would like to support

To ensure your wishes are respected, a solicitor will help you with the correct

wording to make a bequest to SAWA-Australia in your will. We can assure you that your contribution will be used wisely and where it will do the most good. Please complete the form below and send to SAWA-Australia

I wish to make a bequest to SAWA.

Name:.....

Address:.....

.....PC.....

Phone:.....

Email:.....

**The women, boys and girls of
Afghanistan and in Pakistan refugee
camps will appreciate your support**

**ALL funds raised will go to
RAWA projects.**

Administration comes from subs.

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HOW TO SET UP NET BANKING

All banks have a different processing method, so you need to register with your own bank. When you have registered you will need your Card/Access Number, possibly a Security Number and your Internet Password to log in to your bank online.

Once that is established, and you have logged on, look for **Pay Anyone** or for regular monthly regular donations click on **Periodic Payment**.

Follow your bank's online instructions. In the Description area, key in SAWA-Australia donation/your name

Money may be transferred from a savings or cheque account, but not from a credit card account.

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Pay to: SAWA-Australia
BSB 633-000
Acc. No. 120800610

REMINDER

**Annual subscriptions are due on the
1st January or as soon after as
possible. This will help to raise more
funds and to continue to promote
SAWA as widely as possible.**

WHAT YOUR MONEY BUYS IN AFGHANISTAN

- \$20: a flock of chickens
- \$60: notebooks, pencils & sharpeners for 300 students for a year
- \$150: classroom chalk boards for a school
- \$1000: annual medical supplies for a women's health clinic
- \$2000: a school's annual rent
- \$75: salary for 1 teacher for 1 month
- \$135: salary, transport and materials for 1 teacher for 1 month
- \$80: schooling, including materials, for 1 girl for 1 year
- \$125: wage of 1 worker co-ordinating the needs of one region
- \$33: wage of RAWA email admin for 1 month
- \$75 food, clothes and education for 1 child for 1 month
- \$32,345: annual cost of one orphanage
- \$21,000: annual cost of one RAWA girls' secondary school, Rawalpindi
- \$39,240: annual cost to run Malalai, the RAWA hospital

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OTHER WAYS TO HELP

You can contribute enormously by printing and copying this newsletter and the SAWA leaflet attached and giving them to your friends, work colleagues, relatives and organisations. Email it on to your email address list or through your organisation. By encouraging more people to add their names to our email list and to look at the web page: www.sawa-australia.org you will be doing Afghan women and children a big favour.

You might be able to organise a fundraiser in your area/your home/your local hall. You can do this with the help of a few friends and neighbours or members of a group you belong to. You can also encourage your organisations to make a donation, run a fundraiser or become an organisation member of SAWA.

In Canada the members of one Branch organise Pot Luck dinners at friends' homes. Ten people gather and bring food and \$25 each. They have a great time, run a competition and are thrilled to see how easy and what fun it is to make several hundred dollars for RAWA projects.

SAWA_Australia Committee

Grace McCaughey

info@sawa-australia.org

Paul Connell paulc@gcom.net.au

Jacqui Turnbull:

jacqui.turnbull@castlemaine.net.au

Ro Bancroft ro@bancroftart.com.au

Jill Leisegang .nungeena@gcom.net.au

Shana Rowe, Karina de Wolf, Jim Williams, Onnie Wilson, Kerry Bourke, Jane Chesher

(Volunteers needed for projects such as 'Books for Kabul Library')

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BRANCH SUPPORT GROUPS

- Would you like to set up a support group/loose network in your area?
- SAWA-Australia will email you information: -About SAWA/RAWA; Copy of a poster; draft media release; draft agenda.
- List 5 friends, work colleagues, acquaintances and neighbours who are interested in helping.
- Arrange a venue for a public meeting. a relevant video to show, a VCR and supper for about 20 people
- Invite the local Mayor or her/his representative to speak.
- Work out a simple agenda, prepare a poster and write a media release for all local media.
- Then email and talk to everyone you and the others meet and know.
- At the public meeting, set up a small working group to continue with plans made.

Contact info@sawa-australia.org

Your activities can be added to the

web page: www.sawa-australia.org

Good Luck!

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SAWA CONTACTS

Melbourne Onnie 03 9822 8858:

mok@connexus.net.au

Castlemaine Grace: 03 5476 2457

info@sawa-australia.org

Sydney Jane 0415 713 567

janechesher@yahoo.com.au

We need people to act as contacts for other regions/states/towns. We have widespread contacts for you to meet.

HAVE A GO! It's FUN

Mariam Rawi's Itinerary

As organised by Onnie Wilson.

Great work Onnie!

April 14-18 Deakin University
Conference: 'Community Development, Human Rights and the Grassroots'
at the 'Y', Elizabeth St. Melbourne
Mariam guest speaker 14th.

April 15 Melbourne-to be arranged TBA

April 16 Melbourne Meeting with the
VTHC Executive at Trades Hall

April 19 -20 Melbourne TBA

April 21 Melbourne

April 22 Mornington Peninsula Shire
Annual Human Rights Oratorion

10 AM Toorak College,
Old Mornington Rd, Mt Eliza

April 23 Bendigo LaTrobe Uni event

April 24 Castlemaine Concert SAWA

April 25 Melbourne

A Just Australia Conference

April 26 - 30 Canberra

April 30 -May 2 Townsville Coalition
for a Feminist Agenda events

May 2 - 5 Sydney TBA

May 5. 7 pm The film "Osama"

Nova, Carlton---Onnie-03 9822 8858

May 6 Melbourne 'Dinner with Mariam'

Contact Alex Bathal 03 9480 1740

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THANKS FROM SAWA

- John Turnbull for paper
- Jacqui Turnbull: envelopes
- Castlemaine Office Supplies
- Harry Boyle and Gosford Women's Group of Amnesty International \$1000
- Ro Bancroft of Bancroft Art:
www.bancroftart.com.au
Design web page, logo, letterhead
- Onnie Wilson for her great efforts
- Jane, and Katina in Sydney
- Jim Williams and Helen Watters for substantial donations
- Committee for food at meetings

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Contributions are welcome for the

April 5th Newsletter

Closing date is March 16 2004