



From the Editor

I remember well the doubts of many who came to listen to Malalai Joya, during her visits to Australia, when she demanded that all foreign troops should leave Afghanistan immediately. Asked how Afghanistan would survive without the support of the USA and NATO Malalai always said: "Now we are between two enemies. The withdrawal of the occupation forces will make it easier for us to fight one enemy instead of two."

The proof that Malalai was right came in October. On 28 September the Taliban had attacked and occupied the city of Kunduz, but the Afghan military was already recapturing it when a US gunship intervened, targeting a Médecins Sans Frontières hospital with repeated airstrikes, killing 30 people including staff and patients and destroying the hospital completely.

Barak Obama apologized for the "incident", calling it a mistake. But is it? NBC TV reported on 15 October that cockpit recordings from the AC-130 gunship involved in the incident "reveal that the crew actually questioned whether the airstrike was legal", so the strike was obviously ordered from above. Clearly some US soldiers still have a better developed conscience than their president. With friends like him, who needs enemies?



The hospital of Médecins Sans Frontières after the airstrike

What we should remember in these dark times is that SAWA's work is not restricted to relief from the consequences of war. SAWA's objective is to assist the women of Afghanistan in their struggle for a new society that gives women security at home and in public and affords women and men equal rights. This is a challenge that will require our continued support during war as well as peace, if and when it comes.

Matthias Tomczak

SAWA's friends are safe after the earthquake

When a massive earthquake of magnitude 7.5 hit Afghanistan and Pakistan on 26 October and it was reported that Kabul was affected, many feared for the safety of the students and teachers at OPAWC's Vocational Training Centre and AFCECO's foster havens.

The SAWA-Australia (SA) committee got into contact with both organizations and was relieved to learn that everyone connected with SAWA's projects in Afghanistan is safe. OPAWC Executive Director Latifa Ahmady emailed: "Thank you so much for your kind feelings and concerns for us. We are all fine and safe. Some of the houses of the students, which are built from mud bricks, have fallen

down, but their family members are fine. Some people got injured, and we have been living outside for two nights because of possible aftershocks. It was really terrifying, and we have never experienced this in the past. Many people have been killed and injured. Most of the buildings in Kabul are damaged."



A typical house in Afshar district, damaged during the quake

Mahbooba, AFCECO's student scholarship liaison officer, sent us this email: "Thank you very much for your kind email. I am happy to let you know that all AFCECO children and staff are safe and sound. The orphanage buildings hopefully had no damages, however most of the children were very frightened as they experienced such a strong earthquake for the first time. The electricity and the phone services were not available for a few minutes but everything turned normal soon after. After the big earthquake there have been small aftershocks but very light."

Afghanistan is one of the most earthquake-prone countries of the world. Most quakes occur in remote mountainous regions where people are poor and suffer much hardship from such natural disasters. Earthquakes in Kabul are comparatively rare, and one of such magnitude as the one of last month is very unusual. Because the quake originated from great depth the damage has been relatively light, but 50 people were killed in Afghanistan and 120 injured.

Sponsored students try to build their future

Zubaida and Shazia are two students who were sponsored by SAWA members until the completion of their studies earlier this year. We are of course interested to learn how they progress in building their lives, against the many obstacles for women who want to join the workforce, and asked AFCECO for news. We were told that Zubaida is living with her relative and has worked for one month as an intern with no pay. She was then asked to work five more months before she could get paid, so she left the work and is searching for a new job where she will be paid from the start.

Shazia is still trying to get a job but was particularly downhearted because she wanted to fetch her mother, whose health is poor, from Jalalabad to Kabul. A SAWA member arranged with AFCECO to rent an apartment for her and reimburses AFCECO for the cost. So Shazia now lives in Kabul with her mother and brother. The apartment has two rooms with a small kitchen and a bathroom.

When the earthquake struck Afghanistan Shazia's home village was badly hit, and her family lost some relatives. So Shazia, her mother and her brother went to their home village to attend the funeral. We hope that they will find solace by being with their larger family and that Shazia's search for employment will soon be successful.

SAWA promotes Frame by Frame, a documentary about life in Afghanistan today

In 2013 Alexandria Bombach and Mo Scarpelli, two freelance filmmakers from the USA, went to Afghanistan to document the life and work of four press photographers as a means to bring the life of ordinary Afghans to the screen. The result was *Frame by Frame*, a documentary that runs for about 80 minutes.

Frame by Frame has had many screenings at film festivals and screens daily in universities and community groups in the USA. Three months ago Alexandria and Mo approached SAWA with the suggestion that SAWA could help them organise screenings in Australia. As a result SAWA purchased a digital copy of the movie and has the right to use it for fundraising screenings.



Frame by Frame offers a rare chance to see Afghanistan as it is today, beyond the western fixation on Taliban and other disasters. We see the Afghan photographers talking to drug addicts, visiting a burn section of Herat hospital, rushing to a bomb explosion, but also enjoying a boat ride on a beautiful lake, taking photographs of people at leisure, documenting a band concert, and shopping in a supermarket.

The documentary has already been shown at SAWA fundraisers in Perth and Hobart (see page 3 for reports) and will be shown in Melbourne and Adelaide on 20 November and in Sydney in February. SAWA members interested in screening the documentary as a fundraiser – at home, at friends or in a community venue – should let us know through the SAWA (SA) [contact page](#). They will be given the loan of a flash drive that can be used to screen the film on a computer or TV with USB input and has to be returned after the event.

SAWA's work recognized by the Senate

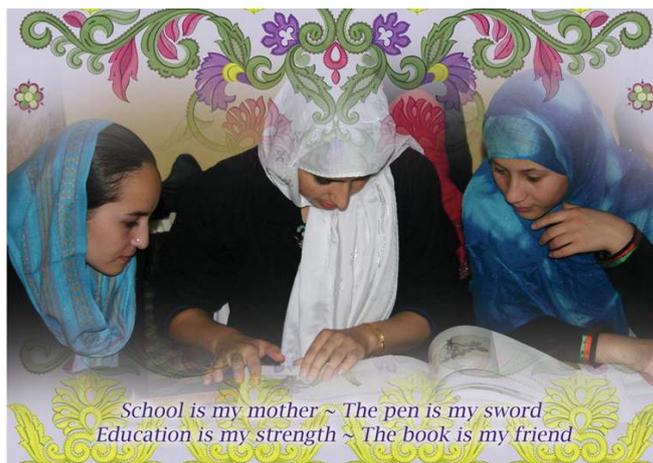
Two months ago SAWA (SA) patron Penny Wright had to resign from her position as Senator for South Australia for family reasons. On 20 August 2015, her last day in the Senate, Penny moved a motion in support of SAWA's work that was unanimously supported by all parties:

I move — that the Senate — (a) notes:
(i) that the costs of political unrest fall disproportionately on the rights and wellbeing of women, and
(ii) that the Support Association for the Women of Afghanistan (SAWA) – Australia was established in 2004, and that SAWA – Australia (South Australia) was set up in 2010 as its first state branch;
(b) acknowledges the valuable work of these organisations, dedicated to raising funds and awareness for human rights, education, nutrition, health, safety and improving the self-esteem of Afghanistan's women and children; and
(c) acknowledges and welcomes the ongoing work of Professor Matthias Tomczak in his role as convener of SAWA – Australia (South Australia) and as a leader in promoting the rights and wellbeing of women in Afghanistan.

We are very thankful for Penny's support and wish her all the best for her family and her future plans.

Send SAWA cards and gifts at Christmas!

It is the time of year when your post box fills with mail from charities of all sorts offering gift cards and other presents. SAWA has a range of goods that will be appreciated by their recipients and assist us in our work. Our festive card *School is my mother - the pen is my sword*, *Education is my strength - the book is my friend* with decorated envelope is a favourite, and our coffee table art book *Two Trees* still makes a beautiful Christmas present. There are also photo cards depicting AFCECO children and women in OPAWC's Vocational Training Centre and Hamoon Clinic as well as cards with beautiful artwork from gifted school children.



This year we have a special offer: Place an online order for \$40 or more and you can add a key ring with LED torch or a 4Gb memory flash drive to your order and get it for free. Just enter the code **2015Xmas** at your shopping cart before proceeding to payment. (This offer is available once per customer and until stock is sold.)





SAWA-Australia (SA)

PO Box 90, Flinders University PO Bedford Park SA 5042
Bendigo Bank BSB 633-000 Account number 126035633 sawa.sa@sawa-australia.org



Convener: Matthias Tomczak **Secretary:** Christine Gamble **Treasurer:** Christine Tomczak
Committee: Maureen Arnott, Elaine Gouldhurst, Kath Jones, Ruth Redfern
Newsletter editor: Matthias Tomczak **Public Officer:** Ruth Redfern **Auditor:** Bob Shahinger
ABN: 73 162 014 759 SA Incorporation No. A38759 SA Licence No. CCP1699

Patron: Penny Wright, previously SA Senator and member of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights

Partner NGOs: OPAWC (Organization for Promoting Afghan Women's Capabilities), AFCECO (Afghan Child Education and Care Organization)

Successful fundraising dinner in Adelaide

After two years without annual dinners Adelaide got up the energy to put on a fundraising dinner on 22 September – and what a success it was! Pondok Bali Restaurant, the venue for previous excellent dinners, offered its Indonesian banquet that was enjoyed by all. Diners were entertained by Trio Montagne, followed by the Afghan music of Farid Drokhsan and friends, who brought everyone to their feet clapping. The restaurant was filled to capacity, and some wondered what to do when it will become too small for future dinners.



The Pondok Bali Restaurant provided a wonderful setting



Farid's Afghan music was the highlight of the evening

A raffle and silent auction helped to raise the financial result of the night to \$2,041. We thank Pondok Bali, Trio Montagne and Farid for their support and all guests for their generous contributions.

Documentary screened in Perth and Hobart, forthcoming in Melbourne and Adelaide

On 4 October the documentary *Frame by Frame* was screened in Perth to an appreciating audience. It was only the second screening of the film in Australia and the first in SAWA's series of screenings around Australia. SAWA (SA) convener Matthias Tomczak was in Perth on the day and introduced the movie with a report on his recent visit to Kabul.

People attending were impressed by the quality of the movie and appreciated the insight into the lives of ordinary Afghans in a country under civil war and fundamentalist threats. \$760 were raised from ticket sales and donations, and SAWA was asked to arrange further screenings for community groups.

Hobart had its screening on 28 October. The event was an outstanding success, with \$1,170 raised and again expressions of interest for further screenings from community groups. The committee thanks the local groups in Perth and Hobart for their efforts and great work in support of the women of Afghanistan.

Screenings in **Melbourne** and **Adelaide** are scheduled for **Friday 20 November**. The details are:

Melbourne: 7.15 pm, St Margaret's Anglican Church Hall, 79-81 Pitt Street Eltham (\$15, \$10 concession)

Adelaide: 7 pm, Thebarton Community Centre, corner of South Road and Ashwin Parade Torrensville. (\$17)

Tickets are available at <http://www.sawa-australia.org/tickets.html> or at the door.

A concert for Christmas in Adelaide

A group of musicians in Adelaide have brought together a string quartet and five wind instrument players under the name NOTOS NONET to perform two gems of 19th century romanticism seldom heard in Australia. They already played to a delighted audience in Renmark and offered to support the women of Afghanistan by performing another concert as a fundraiser for SAWA.



The concert will present a nonet by the German composer Louis Spohr, who introduced the combination of a wind quintet with violin, viola, cello and double bass as the standard combination for nonets, and a nonet by the French composer Louise Farrenc, one of the few French women of her time to have a successful career as a composer. Farrenc was the only woman to hold a full chair at the Paris Conservatoire in the 19th century. Her music was praised by Schumann and Berlioz. Her nonet is a substantial work, described as 'witty, urbane, and utterly charming'. Performing her work in the context of a SAWA fundraiser seems particularly fitting.

The concert will be held on **Saturday 19 December at 2.30 pm** as part of the regular Saturday concerts at Flinders Street Baptist Church. Tickets (\$20, \$15 concession) are available online at <http://www.sawa-australia.org/index.php/shop/tickets-to-events#adelaide> or at the door.

It will be an enjoyable Christmas treat for supporters and friends.

To all members and supporters who cannot be in Adelaide or have to miss the concert for other reasons we extend our best wishes for the Festive Season and thank you for your unwavering support.



SAWA-Australia (NSW) PO Box 1741, Rozelle NSW 2039 www.sawansw.org.au
Bendigo Bank Rozelle Branch BSB 633-000 Account number 141397471 (SAWA-Australia NSW)

Convenor: Shirley Allen **Secretary:** Margaret Hetherton **Treasurer:** Carolyn Allen
Committee: Maryellen Galbally, June Lunsmann, Jenny Matkevich, Margaret Bailey, Joan Long.
Public Officer: Deanna Fekete.

PAKISTAN EXPELLING AFGHAN REFUGEES AND EFFECT ON HEWAD SCHOOL

The problems for Afghans living in Pakistan and for Afghan families attending Hewad have become much worse in recent times. According to the Washington Post in September "every day, hundreds of Afghan refugees arrive at the bus stops of Kabul and other Afghan cities from Pakistan where most have lived for years if not decades." It is estimated that tens of thousands of refugees who fled Afghanistan in the 1990s war period and when the Taliban seized power in 1996 are being forced to return to danger in their war-torn country. Meanwhile, in Pakistan, refugees have stories of being intimidated and harassed by Pakistani police and officials and pressured to leave the country although this is denied by the Pakistani Government. Nevertheless, unless there is an agreement between the Afghan and Pakistan Governments it seems likely that all Pakistani identity cards issued to Afghans will expire in December this year. The fear of remaining illegally is adding to the exodus. This news has implications for the SAWA (NSW) project of funding the Hewad School.

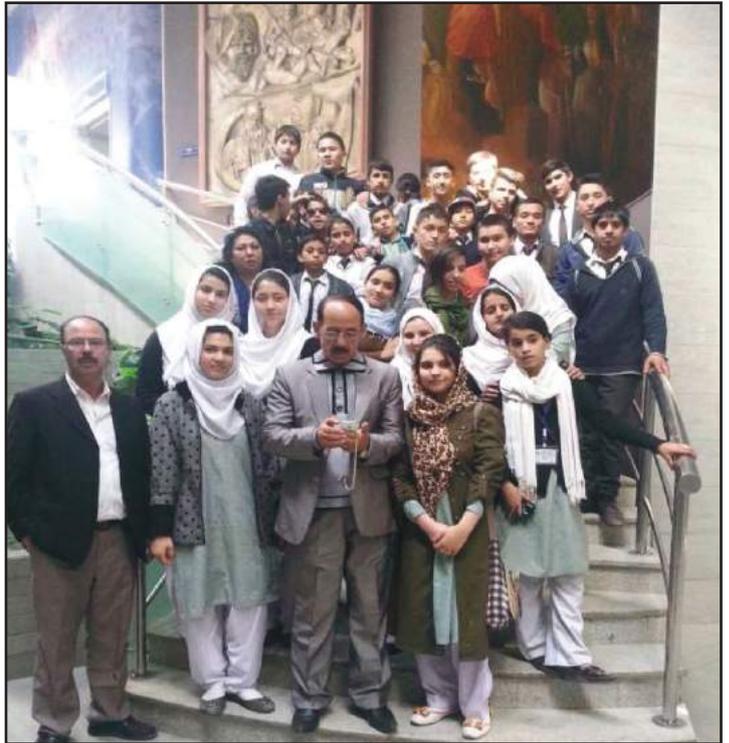
The Friends of RAWA Japan visited Hewad School recently. They tell us that numbers are dropping and that there is increased reluctance to send girls to school. The school staff has also been disrupted. The previous headmistress, Ms Lehana resigned in June in order to return to Afghanistan and a new headmistress has been appointed on a temporary basis.

When Ms Lehana was principal, there was a policy of educating girls free of charge although many boys pay a small fee. Now, in these more anxious times, there is a predominance of boys in the school although still girls account for more than one third of pupils. With the problems for Afghans remaining in Pakistan and these increased difficulties in the school, there is now real possibility that Hewad may have to close. It is the last of the RAWA projects remaining in Pakistan. A number of RAWA people have gone back to Afghanistan despite the increased danger there since the American withdrawal. A number of their projects have also transferred back there.

The SAWA NSW Committee has decided that we should continue to fund the school on a three monthly basis until the situation becomes clear, whilst at the same time actively looking for a new project focussing on the education and promotion of human rights of women and children in Afghanistan. We will continue to fund projects through local Afghan organisations either RAWA or possibly OPAWC, the Organisation for the Promotion of Afghan Women's Capabilities, who run the Vocational Training School in Kabul which is supported by SAWA South Australia. They also seem to be in a better position to provide the kind of financial details which would allow us to eventually apply for tax deductible status.

NEWS FROM SAWA-NSW

Our AGM was held on 20th October. Shirley Allen, Convenor reviewed the various fund-raising activities we have had during the year which were attended by a very positive band of SAWA-NSW supporters. Although our fundraising level has remained



This photo was taken on a field trip in February. The aim of the trip was to be both educative and enjoyable. The students visited the Pakistan Monument Museum in Islamabad which is the best museum in Islamabad with some famous archeological remains. They then had a picnic in the park adjacent to the museum and visited the small zoo inside the park. From the Hewad School Annual Report 2014/15.

constant, it has been difficult to meet the full budget of Hewad. The fall in the Australian dollar means that we have to send almost 25% more than we had to send when the A\$ was close to parity or above the US dollar. In the last school year we sent over A\$29,000 (US\$22,000) and the Japanese Friends of RAWA sent US\$6500. However, that US\$28,000 involved a shortfall for the school of about US\$10,000. RAWA told us that this had to be borrowed from other projects.

Committee for coming year

With the exception of two members, the committee and executive roles remain unchanged. We were sorry to lose Dawn Atkinson (who initiated and led SAWA-NSW) and Susan Martin but we welcomed a new member, Joan Long, who has been a strong supporter in the past and as fundraiser also for RAWA.

DATES FOR DIARY

See www.sawansw.org.au or Facebook page for further details.

• **Tenth Annual SAWA Lunch Thursday 19th November 2015 12 for 12.30pm.** A light lunch with complimentary drink at Clontarf Cottage, 4 Wallace St Balmain - \$45

RSVP before Thursday 12th November to Carolyn Allen, 9818 3185 <mailto:treasurer@sawansw.org.au>

• Film "**Frame by Frame**", a documentary on conditions in Afghanistan. Date TBA probably in early February

• **Annual Birthing Kit Assembly Morning March 2016.** Further details TBA.