

THE FLYING PENGUIN



Newsletter of International Volunteers for Peace
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IVP is the Australian Branch of Service Civil International (SCI) and Network for Volunteer Development in Asia (NVDA)



Inside the Issue

AUSTRALIAN WORKCAMPS

From Goulburn, to Jenolan, Sydney and Taralga, our volunteers have been getting involved in very exciting projects.

INTERNATIONAL PEACE NEWS FROM SCI

100 years of working for peace globally.

IVP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

25th April 2-4pm
Due to Coronavirus, this will be a virtual meeting. Watch our website for details.

EDITORIAL

This newsletter has been prepared by various people over a period of several months. Considering the current and ongoing catastrophic events in Australia, it almost makes our efforts seem meaningless. However we send it to you with the best intentions and an appeal. IVP has been set up to work with community and has the ability to make a small but ongoing difference. If you can think of any way that IVP can contribute in the aftermath of the fires we are very willing to listen to your ideas and try to make them happen. And if you can help implement action even better.

You, our members, are our strength.
Please renew your membership and update your contact details.

WHAT IS INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTARY SERVICE (IVS)?

Longtime IVP activist, Rita Warleigh, represented SCI in a team with five other International Voluntary Service networks. The team were tasked with defining what makes our IVS different to other forms of volunteering. There has been a dramatic increase in opportunities to volunteer overseas, including voluntourism, commercial companies offering some volunteering included in a tour, educational and government institutions and people making direct contacts.

Voluntourism has profit as a main motive and this can lead to projects being of poorer quality, not properly evaluated and not of benefit the local community. This has a negative affect on the reputation of longstanding international volunteering networks such as ours. Although our network has been offering high quality projects for 100 years, volunteering through SCI may not appear so glamorous and requires also more serious commitment.

Our team of six met in person and by skype over a period of two years to discuss and produce several documents. It was a difficult but rewarding experience and we feel that the results have strengthened our belief in the value of what we do and our understanding of the differences and similarities in the six networks.

The document, What is our IVS?, can be found [here](#) and the annex [here](#).

The Volunteer Charter, originally produced ten years earlier, was revised and can be found [here](#).

The UN Sustainability Goals were revised for relevance in the world of volunteering and these can be found on the last two pages of the Informal paper: What is our IVS? [here](#).

AUSTRALIAN WORKCAMPS AND PROJECTS

below and on following pages

IVP continues our successful collaboration of exchanging volunteers through our two networks, Service Civil International (SCI) and Network for Volunteer Development in Asia (NVDA). In 2018 we began collaboration with Asylum Seekers Centre in Newtown, Sydney.

Goulburn Annual Agricultural and Horticultural Show



IVP volunteer team aided organisers of the Show to prepare grounds and display areas for this major annual event and pack up afterwards. The volunteers loved the opportunity to work closely with local volunteers most of whom are in their retirement years. It was a wonderful cultural exchange as well as much appreciated by the Show Committee. [see report on our website.](#)

2020 team L. to R: Sam (Vietnam), Su-Jin (Korea), Cecile (Belgium), Mesu (Fiji), Dave (Australia). Alisa and Ksenia (Russia). At IVP's information stall at the Show, with local IVP member Lazlo (seated)

100 YEARS OF BUILDING PEACE

IVP will will celebrate SCI's 100 years of peace building with events in Sydney based around International Day of Peace, 21st September.

The NSW branch of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) will join with us as it will also be their 100 years in 2020. Assisting with planning are the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN).

On Sunday 20th September we will mount a Peace Expo showcasing successful efforts and methods for promoting peace and intercultural understanding. Peace studies centres, peace organisations, and groups with themes related to peace will be invited.

In the early evening there will be a party for all those who have been involved in IVP over the last 32 years. The venue will be decided soon and announced on IVP website. For now please put the date in your calendar,

An exhibition of activities related to peace-building will continue over the following two weeks, and there will be special events on 21st September to celebrate International Day of Peace.

Many of the Asian branches have already expressed their keenness to be at this event. Lets hope Coronavirus does not interfere with our plans.

Internationally the SCI 100 years celebrations have already begun with a Veterans Meeting in Belgium in 2019 and another in Sri Lanka early in 2020. Words about Actions, a book of archival and activist's stories has been published and can be purchased online or from IVP.

Find out more at the dedicated website:
<https://2020.sci.ngo>

BIOBLITZ AT JENOLAN CAVES



Maria, Babu and Ahmed in the centre with IVP team at the BioBlitz event in Jenolan

An IVP Weekend workcamp team pitched in to assist organisers of a citizen science event at Jenolan Caves. For this occasion we advertised for volunteers at the Asylum Seeker Centre, and three people on temporary visas came along.

The principal task was catering for the 50 or so citizen scientists, lay people offering their observational skills to extend under expert supervision spot surveys of animal or plant groups in a particular site. Jenolan serves as a refuge for many native plants and animals, a number that are restricted, rare or endangered.

Our team working with another group of volunteers, a landcare student club, plated up interesting meals for the numerous parties out searching for frogs, or endangered orchids, or platypuses. When not so engaged we joined a couple of the parties ourselves, spotting one of the species of marsupial gliders high up in a tree, and another listening for tell tale notes of an illusive frog.

The Saturday morning we mounted a stall to explain what IVP offers to passing public. The BioBlitz project is connected to a landscape conservation venture we had been supporting, so we could mix with scientists and park staff some known to us from previous work dedicated to understanding and protecting the wild habitat of the many endemic species in the area.

STONEQUARRY

In 2018, IVP signed off on this woodland recovery project after four years. The wealth of observations and research accumulated, and the numerous interactions with the local community are source material for a booklet, aimed to educate the public on the biological and cultural value of this small plot.

In this time, six international workcamps contributed, making a mark on the site, and the community. Each year local primary school students joined volunteers for a nature study day and barbecue. On a later occasion the volunteers visited their school, assisting with classes on wild birds and their nests, helping pupils construct and paint nest boxes to provide homes for wild sugar gliders, tiny marsupials that inhabit hollows high up in gum trees in the local area.

The two-week camps alternated with weekend workcamps attracting local volunteers. Partnering with IVP were the local historical society, a grassland conservation group and experts in woodland ecology.

While work was under the auspices of the Taralga Cemetery Committee, funding for the Stonequarry project came through the State Government via the K2W landscape conservation partnership. IVP has taken an active role in the consolidation of K2W as a round table for public and private land managers, ecologists and scientists with stake in this valley. K2W allows for funds from various environmental programmes at different levels of government to be directed at groups or individuals best equipped to implement them.



Volunteers weeding out blackberry and broom by hand. New plantings can be seen behind the group.

INSPIRE TOUR, JANUARY 2018

IVP hosted a group of 21 social work students and two INSPIRE staff from University of Hong Kong in a flying visit to interact with community volunteers and projects in several locations of the Sydney hinterland.

See photo on front page: Inspire group on Clarke Island in Sydney Harbour, encounters Aboriginal heritage through a tour with Tribal Warrior, Aboriginal sailing vessel.

THE DAY THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

by Inez Jessurun, IVP returned volunteer

Some days are very memorable. In this case the Wedding day of Martha last month. I met Martha in Kakuma refugee camp in North Kenya at a workcam organised by SCI/IVP in 2003. She and 80,000 other refugees changed the way I saw the world. Safety, hope and being part of a society are the most important things in life. She fled as a child with her younger brother from the Sudan and tried to evade the wars in the region for about 10 years till she ended up in Kakuma Refugee camp. Her family dispersed everywhere or were killed. She had been nearly 10 years in the camp with only her younger brother when we met. Life was very hard for them. She tried to be active and learn as much as she could. She was involved with the community in all kind of activities. She had sometimes to choose between going to school or queueing for water and food.

In the end she was one of the lucky ones to be accepted as refugees in United States. To get her year 12 certificate she worked evenings and nights and went to school during the day. Then she trained as a nursing aid (LPN) and she is seeing her future clear ahead as a registered nurse or higher. Since meeting her at the camp, I have supported her, but she is the driving force. She is the most impressive, strong, capable woman I have ever met. She is an inspiration for me. Sending money overseas to somebody ... not all are scams. It can give somebody the opportunity to start a new life. She is flying and I am happy. Have a fantastic day, Martha. You cannot change the world, but you can change lives and never underestimate the impact you knowingly or unknowingly have on others. So you all go out there, go to a workcamp, bring peace and change some people's lives for the better.

PEACE IN NEPAL

While in Nepal, Rita met the two groups of SCI Nepal who had been having communication difficulties. Good conflict resolution begins by listening to both sides and with this as a starting point, compromises were reached, an agreement signed and a united SCI Nepal recommenced workcamps and exchanges. Another achievement while there was a meeting between SCI Nepal and representatives of our Partner Organisations in Nepal, Friendship Foundation Nepal (FFN) and Volunteer Initiative Nepal (VIN).



*Happy faces after many barriers were overcome.
L to R: Anil (SCI), Bhupender (VIN), Prakash (FFN),
Dinesh (VIN), Raju (SCI), Rita (IVP), Sudarshan
(FNN).*

FIRE RECOVERY IN LAKE CONJOLA AREA

Call for Medium Term Volunteers

IVP has been working hard to find ways to get involved with fire recovery. There is interest from SCI branches, both to send volunteers and to donate to projects here.

Our first successful liaison is with Blaze Aid where we can really contribute by providing medium term volunteers to act as team leaders. We would love some Australian IVP members to apply and you can find the call for volunteers on our website.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

All IVP workcamps and projects will be deferred until Coronavirus pandemic is under control.

IVP has a New Office

The office has moved as we could no longer afford the rent at Clinton St although it was a lovely space. We are now situated in Rita's house where IVP began.

The office is usually functioning on a Thursday and you are welcome at any time.

The new address is:

103A Goldsmith St, Goulburn 2580

For more information: www.ivp.org.au

Keep in Touch

Keep up with international events by subscribing to SCI Ezine or check out the SCI website: sci.ngo

Follow IVP on Facebook at www.facebook.com/IVPAustralia

If you have done a workcamp with us, please join IVP Alumni:

www.facebook.com/groups/259729484122639/

Membership

Note that there is now a members area on our website: ivp.org.au. Please renew your membership through the form on the website or write to hr@ivp.org.

Committee News

An AGM was held on 23rd June and we would like to welcome the new committee. Eva Jozsa (Chair), Stephen Horn (Treasurer),

Mitch Seru (Secretary), Rita Shii (Membership), Trinx Wang (Website), Stella Shiu (Bookkeeper), Mylène Baland (Social

Media), Rita Warleigh (Australian Projects).

IVP IN ASIA-PACIFIC

The mid-year Asian Platform Meeting (APM) was hosted by STEP, Vietnam, our newest SCI Contact organisation. Coordinator, Wendy, organised the meeting at Vung Tau, close to Ho Chi Minh City. Stephen Horn represented IVP Australia alongside reps from India, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Hong Kong and Indonesia.

APM links activities of SCI branches in our region, and represents these interests within the larger SCI movement.

As usual a short workcamp was planned for after the meeting. On this occasion, delegates joined STEP members early the next morning on the beach for a clean-up action drawing attention to the volume of plastic being washed up from the busy sea lanes.

IVP IN INTERNATIONAL ARENA

Each year in December SCI runs the ICM (International Committee Meeting) over four to five days in which reports are received from all arms of the movement; the budget for the next year approved; policy resolutions and proposals for change are debated; and elections held for vacancies on executive committee.

These somewhat dry and onerous matters are leavened by the camaraderie of delegates and warmth of welcome from the host branch. This year ICM was held in a nature lodge in a wild forest in the north east of the Netherlands.

IVP founder, Rita Warleigh was doubly honoured - her invited chapter in that volume, and as retiring Vice President standing down from a demanding and successful four years on the international executive, first as ordinary member, then Vice President, with a year also as Acting Treasurer.

Having a representative at ICM really makes a difference to IVP's engagement with the SCI movement and we appreciate having Stephen Horn as our delegate there.

Stephen has also joined SCI's Finance Committee and attends on-line meetings to make important decisions about how SCI finances are managed.

WORDS ABOUT DEEDS

The meeting included the official launch for the SCI centenary year, and coincident launch of Words about Deeds, a splendid compilation of reminiscences of veterans of our movement.

Another great international connection is through our committee member, Rita Shii who has joined the Asia-International Working Group (AIWG) which makes decisions about new groups in the region and evaluates new partner organisations.