

The Don Chipp Foundation

Newsletter, April 2008

The Don Chipp Foundation is an independent research body affiliated with the Australian Democrats. Don Chipp, as the founder of the Australian Democrats, vowed to 'keep the bastards honest'. The Foundation aims to retain that basic premise through the promotion of fiercely independent research and public debate.



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Welcome From the Chair

Dear friends

The Don Chipp Foundation continues to do good work in the community.

This year we have already launched our grants program and Siobhan, our programs co-ordinator, is busy answering queries from institutions wanting to submit applications.

Last year we held some very successful events including two major forums, a grants presentation day and the **Janine Haines Lecture** series. This was very well attended in Perth, with our key speaker the well known barrister and refugee rights advocate **Julian Burnside**.

This year we have some exciting events being planned. The Janine Haines lecture should be a great draw-card for those interested in ethics and animal liberation, with **Peter Singer** as keynote speaker. We are privileged to have Prof. Singer as our esteemed guest and thank Siobhan very much for organizing this event.

In keeping with our charter, we are also funding a major academic conference: **The 4Rs - Rights, Respect, Responsibility and Reconciliation** (30 September -3 October), covering some of the most

important social and legal issues being debated in our communities.

We also continue to assist the **Edmund Rice Centre** in its on-going research on deported asylum seekers.

Other events this year include our grants presentation day and a **women's rights forum** in November; this will focus on local issues for women but will also have an international perspective on rights for women in developing and war-torn countries.

One other important quest this year is to make the Foundation more financially independent, and thereby seek to expand its capacity as an organization committed to community debate on important current issues.

Any assistance you can provide in continuing the work of the Foundation would be warmly welcomed.

Best regards,

Dr Nina Burridge

Chairperson

Don Chipp Foundation

INSIDE THIS EDITION	Page
Interview: Dr Melissa Boyde and Dr Denise Russell	2
Jennifer Burn on research into sex trade and trafficking of women	3
2008 Janine Haines Lecture	3
Interview: Dr Nina Burridge	4-5
Voices of Children: A Sense of Community	6

The Don Chipp Foundation gratefully acknowledges funding received from the Department of Finance and Administration.

INTERVIEW: Dr Melissa Boyde and Dr Denise Russell

In 2007 Dr. Melissa Boyde and Dr. Denise Russell, both from the University of Wollongong, received a Don Chipp Foundation small grant to help them host a forum on the use of animals in research. Here the Don Chipp Foundation speaks to the researchers about their concern for animals and ongoing work.

“A re-orienting of thinking so that animals are no longer seen as a resource but are regarded as having inherent value.”

DCF: Dr. Boyde and Dr. Russell, you have both received funding from the Don Chipp Foundation to hold a symposium on the use of animals in research. How will that proceed and what do you hope to achieve by hosting a forum on such a topic?

Boyde and Russell: The symposium on alternatives to using animals in scientific and medical research will be held on 3rd October at Sydney University.

Invited speakers – from universities across Australia and several animal protection organisations – will meet to focus on the following topics: current guidelines on the use of animals in research; problems in implementing the alternatives provision; scientific/medical alternatives to using animals in research; legal issues related to the use of alternatives.

The final session will develop strategies for implementing change. We will be setting up a website to provide current information on replacement of animals in research and we envisage that from the symposium and website will emerge various initiatives for change.

DCF: When did each of you become interested in animals and how did your interest develop?

Russell: I have always been interested in animals and during my time teaching at Sydney University I designed and taught a course entitled ‘Humanity and Animality’ for 2nd and 3rd year philosophy students.

I began a journal called *Animal Issues* which I edited for many years. It has now been taken up by Brill Publishers as part of the *Animals and Society Journal*.

Boyde: I have had a lifelong interest in animals. For the past twenty years I have owned a small herd of cows starting with

two original friesans bought to eat the grass on five acres. The herd grew by accident – different bulls broke through various fences, and two multiplied to 12. With me they’ve travelled from Picton, to Kangaroo Valley to Bathurst and finally back to the south coast.

Getting to the know the cows, and never willing to send them to the abattoir, has strengthened my determination to direct some of my research focus to the situation many animals find themselves in – whether in laboratory cages or feed lots etc.

DCF: What do you see as the most significant issue/s facing animals, and do you have any thoughts on the way forward?

Boyde and Russell: There are so many. This is very difficult to answer. Some of the key issues are: the deplorable waste and suffering of experimental animals, live export of animals, intensive factory farming, loss of habitat for wild animals, animal cruelty and the use of live animals for medicines.

A re-orienting of thinking so that animals are no longer seen as a resource but are regarded as having inherent value.

Encouraging cross discipline collaborations to strengthen capacity to make change – this is the aim of the symposium on alternatives.

DCF: Do you have any upcoming projects dealing with animals and their wellbeing?

Melissa Boyde is running a seminar program on animals and representation, and developing a university course on representations of animals in the visual arts at the University of Wollongong.

Denise Russell is writing a book on the oceans which includes chapters on threats facing whales and dolphins and the over-exploitation of fish.

◀ END

In 2007 the Don Chipp Foundation funded a new research project into the Circumstances and Support Needs of Women and Girls Sex Trafficked to Australia. The project researchers are Jennifer Burn from the Anti-Slavery Project at the University of Technology, Sydney and Dr Sallie Yea.

The Don Chipp Foundation funds research into the sex trade and the trafficking of women in Australia.

The outcomes of the project are to contribute to a better practical and theoretical understanding of the pathways by which women are trafficked into Australia for the purposes of sexual servitude and also to provide practical guidance to human rights and sex workers and trafficked women's support agencies and government bodies in supporting trafficked women's needs.

Women trafficked into sexual servitude in Australia will be interviewed in both Sydney and Melbourne. All participants will have exited trafficking and the full and informed consent of each participant will be obtained.

We are aiming to interview 50 women for this project, yielding original research and practical strategies. The interviews will cover experiences prior to trafficking, experiences during exploitation and on exiting the trafficking experience.

The project was to run January-July 2008. We are running a little behind schedule due to complying with the University ethics approval process.

We have proceeded to design the interview survey forms, translate the forms into Thai and Korean and continue the literature review process.

The international literature as substantiated by our experience is that there are three main stages in the sex trafficking process.

These are the recruitment and transportation, exploitation and exit from trafficking.

The support of the Don Chipp Foundation is very much valued and this funding will make a difference to the Australian understanding of the trafficking processes.

Hopefully it will be used to develop strategies to prevent trafficking and protect those who have been trafficked.

Jennifer Burn
Director,
UTS Anti-Slavery Project
www.antislavery.org.au

◀ END

"This funding will make a difference to the Australian understanding of the trafficking processes."

Janine Haines Lecture

The 2008 Janine Haines Lecture will be delivered by Australia's most influential philosopher,

Prof. Peter Singer

It will be held in the grounds of Melbourne University on the evening of Thursday July 31 2008

Watch the Don Chipp Foundation website for more information

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INTERVIEW: **Nina Burridge**



Nina Burridge has been the Chair of the Don Chipp Foundation since its inception.

Here Dr Burridge speaks about what motivates her to remain involved in community work.

DCF: Nina, you have been involved in community groups and have worked on social justice campaigns for many years. What motivates you to remain involved?

Burridge: Reflecting on this I think it has to do with a desire to build a socially equitable and just society. It might be naïve or clichéd, but I have always had a desire to make a difference – no matter how small. I think the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson have summed it up for me ‘...to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition,...’.

I suppose the background is that as a young migrant kid growing up in suburban Perth I understood what it meant to be socially disadvantaged – but I was fortunate enough to get a good education and as a teacher and academic I’m fully aware of the impact this has had on my life chances.

I just think it is important that we as a community provide the means and the opportunities for all to succeed in life, regardless of their race, gender or socioeconomic status.

As I say to teacher education students, just because a child is born poor doesn’t mean they are born stupid.

Intelligence is not distributed by the size of a parent’s wallet – but unless we as a social democracy step in and address some of the disadvantages faced by marginalised people, through adequate resourcing of our schools and hospitals, we will only entrench the disparity between rich and poor. The other point is that in a globalised world we all have to accept the responsibility for human rights and the growing cosmopolitan nature of our cities at the local as well as the international level.

If we accept that transnational movement of workers is a fact of life – then we have a responsibility to set up trans-national mechanisms and global human rights instruments that safeguard people from discrimination and exploitation.

DCF: In 2008 one of the events you will be working on is a public forum on international women’s issues. What do you see as the big issues confronting women around the world? What would you like to achieve through the forum?

Burridge: I think that even at the local level, despite decades of feminism, women’s rights in the home and in the workplace need to be addressed.

A recent HREOC report noted that wages for women have not kept up with those of men, even though women now comprise over 50% of university graduates.

Women are still very much a minority in positions of power, whether it be on corporate boards, in politics and even in institutions such as universities.

And of course there is the issue of domestic violence which still predominantly affects women far more than men.

And let us remember that feminism has largely been a middle-class white movement. It has never really impacted on women in developing countries, nor has it touched women in some fundamentalist religious communities such as Saudi Arabia – where despite its enormous wealth, women are still suppressed and can be subjected to unspeakable barbarism – even through legal court channels.

What gave me the impetus for a forum on human rights was reading about a Saudi woman who was sentenced to 90 lashes (later increased to 140), despite being raped – her crime was that she was alone with a man in a car.

I then watched a 4 Corners report on women in Afghanistan and I read another story about women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo – it all brought it home to me that women are subjected to unspeakable acts of cruelty and that many live in conditions that I could not even begin to imagine.

What I hope will come out of the forum is a heightened awareness of the plight of some women in the world and perhaps some positive action, either through a fundraising strategy or some political action through our leaders to convey the message to other countries that women – like all people – should be accorded the same basic human rights those of us in more fortunate environments enjoy everyday.

DCF: In 2007, both you and Andrew Bartlett were recognised by the Edmund Rice Centre for your work for refugees. Do you feel optimistic about the future in relation to challenging social issues such as the treatment of asylum seekers and Indigenous Australians? What can we all do to make a positive change?

Burridge: I am more optimistic that I was six months ago before the election of the Labor government – but I'm not so naïve as to think that this new government will behave exactly as we wish it to in terms of refugees.

It has closed down the Pacific solution strategy and that is a plus. We are yet to see it remove the temporary protection visa (TPV) system – and I have a number of friends still seeking permanent residency who are on bridging visas; the Minister is not moving fast enough in my view in giving these people any sense of hope for the future.

Minister Evans has said that he is not going to make any drastic changes to policy in the short term, and that is somewhat of a disappointment.

Regarding Indigenous Australians – I was very heartened by the national apology on the first day of sitting of the new Federal parliament. It was a long time coming – and very moving.

The question now is how far are they prepared to go with progressing the 'sorry' to something meaningful for Indigenous Australians – that is the crux of the matter and the jury is still out on that.

All I can say is that there is much to do in so many areas, but education is a key area that needs to be addressed.

Hopefully they will do better than the last government and consult more with Indigenous peoples before they implement policies which impact on people's lives in the way that the intervention in the NT did.

DCF: The Don Chipp Foundation has contributed to many social debates over the last few years, and funded a significant amount of research. To your mind, what is the Don Chipp Foundation's greatest achievement?

Burridge: For me it has to do with providing funds to community organizations and to university research groups to investigate issues that are not always popular.

I think some of the research on the impact of government policies on refugees in our community has been great. We have also funded research on the impact of Work Choices on women that has been very useful too.

◀ END

Voices of Children: A Sense of Community

What are the everyday experiences of children and young people living in the Shoalhaven area and how are these experiences reflected in the ways in which they identify themselves as individuals and engage with their local community?

Voices of Children: A Sense of Community explores these issues in a project involving Indigenous students attending primary and secondary schools within the Shoalhaven area.

Using disposable cameras, and with requests to gather photographs of things they see and do on a regular basis, participants in this project have captured a range of images.



These have been presented as large-scale framed photographs as well as projected images in a very successful professional exhibition held in February this year at the Shoalhaven City Arts Centre in Nowra, NSW.

A key feature of the project is that it has provided students with opportunities for taking part in a creative venture with a focus on issues of identity and inclusion, both critical elements in ensuring academic success.

Research suggests that student well-being is more likely to be supported when individuals experience a strong sense of self, heritage and culture, as well as a clearly defined place in the world based on their interactions with others.

For Indigenous students to be successful in these terms, their sense of identity must involve a self-concept that includes an affirmation of them as Indigenous (Ainsworth & McRae, 2006).

This project rests on collaboration between the schools and the local community and it actively promotes an exploration of identity and self-concept, which can then be used as a basis for self-affirmation.

The exhibition contains photographs reflecting the relationships and interests of those taking part in the project, as well as many natural features in the Shoalhaven area.

Images of friends and family, including siblings, parents and other family members engaged in a variety of activities, suggest the importance of these relationships.

Pets such as dogs, cats and horses are also often the focus of attention. Action shots of children riding skate-boards and bikes, or performing daring feats on trampolines, reflect high levels of activity and skill.

Images of the natural environment including the bush that surrounds many homes, long stretches of beach and ocean as well as close-up shots of sculpted rock pools and their inhabitants attest to the beauty of the area and the appreciation that the children have for it. ◀ **END**

Small Grants Program 2008

Applications closed on Monday April 14 for the 2008 Don Chipp Foundation small grants program.

Visit the Don Chipp Foundation website for more information:

www.donchippfoundation.org.au

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