



Ode Cologne
The news journal of WIPAN



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Welcome to the 24th edition of the WIPAN e-Bulletin.

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WIPAN at the IPPF & CURE International Conference's - Bangkok

WIPAN was invited to attend two International Conferences in Bangkok in March this year. WIPAN's director, Kat Armstrong, took every opportunity at these conferences to promote the importance of including women with lived experience in the decision making processes that directly impact them. She developed working relationships with other NGOs and people who share WIPAN's aim of reducing the rate of imprisonment for women. WIPAN also had the opportunity to visit the Bangkok Central Women Correctional Institution.

This year [The International Penal and Penitentiary Foundation \(IPPF\)](#) held its annual colloquium on the implementation and the impact of the [Bangkok Rules](#) on women's imprisonment. The UN General Assembly adopted the Bangkok Rules in 2010 to promote best practice standards for women in prison. They are the first international guidelines to recognise the importance of a gendered approach to the incarceration of women, and are a welcome addition to the International framework. The colloquium brought together academics, prisons officials, members of the judiciary and NGOs from around the world to discuss various issues of significance in their country. Kat was able to bring a fresh perspective as a woman with lived experience who works so closely alongside other women with lived experience.

The CURE conference brought together many participants, including Brett Collins of [Justice Action](#) and Debbie Kilroy of [Sisters Inside](#). Kat prepared a presentation to the group on the limited levels of access to education that women have in custody. Fortunately, Debbie (many thanks!) was able to present on Kat's behalf given she was needed back at the IPPF conference.

The conferences were revitalising and it was inspiring to see so many people from around the world recognising the need to focus on women as a separate group with different needs within the, largely male, prison populations.

Loss of promised funding from the National Crime Prevention Fund

In early 2014 WIPAN were officially informed by the Coalition Federal government that WIPAN would not be receiving the National Crime and Prevention funding grant, previously awarded by the then Labor Minister for Justice, the Hon Jason Claire. WIPAN submitted a tender to the Federal Government in April 2013 applying for funding from the National Crime Prevention fund to create and implement a youth mentoring program for female youth aged 15 to 21. Along with approximately 86 other organisations, WIPAN were notified of their success in the tender and advised the first instalment of the grant would be sent in September 2013.

When the Coalition were elected September 2013, WIPAN were sent an email advising that the new elected government might not honour the funding as they needed to fulfil their own pre-election promises. WIPAN lobbied extensively throughout October and November 2013 to The

Minister of Justice, Michael Keenan and Attorney General, George Brandis, supplying many support letters obtained from State and Federal members of parliament, community organisations and government departments.

Unfortunately, all the support received and the lobbying to the federal government was to no avail and WIPAN was advised that the essential funding will not be received. WIPAN is now faced with the very real prospects of closure. If WIPAN cannot secure any further funding by July 2014, less than 3 months away, than WIPAN's doors and services will be closing in November 2014.

Women in Prison in Australia Chapter

The IPPF is going to publish a book on Women in Prison and the effects of the Bangkok Rules. Many countries have submitted chapters and WIPAN has had the opportunity to draft the Australian chapter. This has been a fantastic opportunity for WIPAN to prepare a comprehensive snapshot of the Australian experience of women in prison. The Chapter presents current and historical statistical information. It also discusses the experiences of women in Australian prisons and the issues and concerns they face. The Chapter was informed by the information WIPAN receives from the women we work with who have lived experience, and the legislation and policies that exist in Australia.

WIPAN is excited to have been involved in creating this excellent resource. We hope that it will be useful in identifying some of the best international practices and improvements that may be able to influence Australian Governments to adopt better policies for the treatment of women who have come into contact with the criminal justice system.

UNSW Internships and Student Placements at WIPAN

At the end of 2013 WIPAN was very fortunate to meet with professors, academics and administrators from the University of NSW, University of Sydney and the University of Technology Sydney. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and establish working partnerships between WIPAN and the various universities.

WIPAN is delighted to announce that we now have a partnership in place, including participation in the universities various student internship programs. A student from UNSW has just commenced an internship with WIPAN for Semester 1 of 2014, and other students, both from the University of Sydney and UNSW have also just begun voluntary student placements at WIPAN. We look forward to implementing and establishing other areas of collaborative partnerships with and between the various universities.

International Women's Day 2014 - Perpetual Presentation

As part of the celebrations for International Women's Day 2014, WIPAN were invited to present to a proportion of the staff of [Perpetual Limited](#). Perpetual Limited is an independent and diversified financial services group providing specialised investment management, wealth advice and corporate fiduciary services to individuals, families, financial advisers and institutions.

WIPAN's Director, Kat Armstrong, attended the Perpetual offices and gave a presentation on the work of WIPAN, the women and youth who WIPAN walk beside, and Kat's own personal story. The presentation was received well, with the staff asking how they might assist WIPAN to continue this important community work.

If WIPAN is to continue its work then there is an urgent need to diversify funding options, which may include approaching and/or creating corporate partnerships.

Chinese Ministry of Justice Presentation

The [Australian Human Rights Commission](#) invited WIPAN to present to the Chinese Ministry of Justice. The Chinese delegation is in Australia to obtain knowledge of Australian programs, practices and policies to enhance the human rights of women in prison in China.

WIPAN's Mentoring Coordinator, Tara Williams, gave a fantastic presentation to the delegation. Tara presented statistical information about women in prison in Australia and addressed the need to have a gendered response to address their needs. She explained the mentoring role of WIPAN, and highlighted to the delegation its success in reducing the recidivism rates of mentees.

Her presentation was very well received. Many questions were posed to her about the program, and a number of members of the delegation expressed concern when they heard of WIPAN's funding situation.

Service of the Month - StreetSmart Australia

Frustrated by the lack of action and support from Government, [StreetSmart Australia](#) was established in 2003 to support and strengthen smaller, grassroots community organisations helping the homeless. These smaller organisations are critical in helping many people in crisis. StreetSmart helps out by raising funds and delivering financial grants, raising community awareness of the issues of homelessness and assisting these organisations to connect across their communities.

StreetSmart is a unique bridge between those that want to help people experiencing homelessness and the grassroots agencies that are changing lives. They believe in the support of emergency aid and critical services, and development of projects and programs that encourage social inclusion, empowerment and sustainable change for people experiencing homelessness.

When StreetSmart raise money from the public 100 per cent of the donations are distributed in the form of grants. To date StreetSmart have raised \$2.46 million, supporting 646 grassroots projects throughout Australia.

Membership Renewals Due as of 1 July 2014

A reminder that it is only 3 months away for you to renew your and/or join WIPAN's membership base. As of 1st July the WIPAN membership is due. Please go online to renew <http://www.wipan.net.au/membership.html> and pay via a secure credit card payment or alternatively you can download a membership form, complete and post together with your payment to WIPAN, PO Box 345, Broadway NSW 2007. Even if you are time poor (which most of us are!), and feel you don't have the time to dedicate, your becoming a member can still assist WIPAN. Please continue to support us to do the community work. WIPAN is the ONLY community organisation in NSW mentoring and advocating for women and female youth affected by the criminal justice system. Without your continued support, our future is at risk. Please pass on to your networks too. If you would like us to remind you closer to the 1st of July, please just email admin@wipan.net.au

CONTACT WIPAN

For further information about WIPAN including our executive members, general members, our funding bodies, strategic plan or WIPAN's vision & aims, please contact us.

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