



## **Advancing the human rights of women caught up in the criminal justice system.**

WELCOME to the third edition of the WIPAN e-news bulletin

In this e-bulletin:

- Our first 2 Volunteer Mentors Matched
- Referrals Needed...Mentors trained and waiting
- Dillwynia Expo & NAIDOC Celebration
- An Ex- Prisoners Story
- Volunteer Exec Committee Member Interviews
- Newtown Agencies Network - NAG
- Membership
- Service of the Month
- Contact WIPAN

### **First 2 Mentors Matched**

This month we extremely are proud to announce our first two successful matches with our volunteer mentors and mentees (ex-prisoners). The mentors have been meeting weekly face-to-face with their mentees and are in the process of establishing their relationship.

We would like to like to share one of our Mentors story with you;

[Kathy's Blog; read here ....](#)

### **Referrals Needed .... Mentors waiting to be matched**

We have 18 wonderful women waiting patiently to be matched with mentees. If you are aware of any women who have recently exited prison or who are about to and who may need the ongoing support of a friendly face in the community, please either refer them to us or let them know we are willing to help them. Our mentors are an incredibly caring, motivated, intelligent, socially aware and humorous group of women who are very keen to provide the much needed support required for a smooth transition back into the community.

For more information, call Samantha at WIPAN on 02 8011 0692 or 0415 454 770 or you can email [Samantha Bamforth](#) or visit the [WIPAN website](#).

### **Dillwynia Expo, NAIDOC Celebration & Staff Meeting**

Shari Martin, the General Manager of Dillwynia Correctional Centre, recently invited WIPAN to attend both the NAIDOC Celebration and the Expo at Dillwynia. NAIDOC was a wonderful morning of traditional dancing, singing and ceremony presented by women prisoners, celebrating their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage. The choir sang beautifully, a poem was humbly recited and a touring indigenous comedian had the women in roars of laughter. It was fantastic to be a part of the celebration and particularly so watching the pride plastered across the women's faces as they received certificates of achievement from Shari for their individual successes – including the demonstration of great work ethic and the completion of studies.

The Expo at Dillwynia occurs every few months and is an opportunity for relevant organisations to go into the prison and speak to the women directly about their service and the needs of the

women. WIPAN spoke to several women about the mentoring program, which was received with great interest. The women voiced a need for support outside of their normal peer groups upon release, many of whom would have no other social support should they decide to change their life direction.

We are very grateful to Shari Martin and all the staff at Dillwynia for being gracious hosts, a great source of information and for allowing us valuable contact with women pre-release.

## **An Ex-Prisoners Story**

### **Getting Out**

*I am 36 years of age. I've spent many years being a frequent flyer in and out of jail, living an active addiction, crime and being homelessness living on the streets.*

*Usually when I get out, I'm so anxious and overwhelmed in anticipation to get out. The first thing I do is run to the streets and GET ON!!!!*

*This time I am trying something different as I am so sick of getting locked up and doing time in jail!!*

*So my day has finally come, I am being released back into the world again. I was so excited, nervous, anxious, sad and happy. Just totally overwhelmed with every emotion and thought possible.*

*I was being driven by the chaplain of the jail to a Rehab. In my head at the time I thought WOOHOO I'm GETTING OUT. If I can do all the time in jail that I have done, 6 months in rehab I can do that too, what have I got to lose. So I was driven to Rehab. As we left the jail I was so excited and scared at the same time. I was so overwhelmed with sights sounds and the feeling of cruising on the freeway in a car. I was overwhelmed with all the choices that were lying before me.*

*It was all happening!! I'm so glad that I had someone to drive me to my destination and that I had a safe place to go too.*

*By the time I got to rehab I was a mess just so spun out!! It's actually taken about 3 weeks to actually come down mentally and emotionally from being in jail and it's still a process now.*

*I'm now off drugs finding out who I am for the first time in my life.*

*Anne.*

## **Volunteer Executive Committee Member**

We are currently seeking to appoint an additional volunteer woman executive committee member with media/communication training and/or experience. We are already in receipt of applications and scheduling interviews. Applications will remain open until the member has been appointed.

For further information email [WIPAN](mailto:WIPAN) or visit the jobs page on the [WIPAN website](http://WIPAN website).

## **Newtown Agencies Group - NAG**

WIPAN were invited to attend the Newtown Agencies Group (NAG) by Sue Steedman of [Our Place](http://Our Place) and Paul Adabie of [Newtown Neighbourhood Centre](http://Newtown Neighbourhood Centre). NAG is a network of community organisations that comes together seeking to address social issues pertinent to the Newtown area. The topic of discussion was boarding houses, specifically tenants' rights within the residential tenancy act and the standards in which these houses are kept.

We heard from Carly about [Rosemounts](http://Rosemounts) which is a service aimed at young persons and their family offering counselling (general & specialist), research & advocacy, day programs and a study support centre.

James from [Redfern Community Centre](http://Redfern Community Centre) talked about the centre that is a multicultural centre and offers employment, education, legal, childcare, community events and recreational services.

## **Memberships**

WIPAN are currently in the midst of a membership campaign that will see us calling for greater support within the community. Membership entitles you to play an active part in the continued growth and future development of the organisation, if you so choose. Thank you to those WIPAN supporters, new and old, who have already authorised their membership renewal.

For prospective and to-be-renewed members please submit an application via our [website](#) and then contact [WIPAN](#) for EFT details or alternatively download a [Membership Form](#) and post it in with the membership fee to WIPAN - PO Box 345, Broadway NSW 2007

## Service of the Month

[Women's & Girls' Emergency Centre](#) is a drop in centre for homeless women and their children in the Inner City of Sydney.

"We provide access to basic necessities such as food, showers, washing machines, material and social assistance, a safe space, and a place to create community. We also provide case management services to assistance women to access housing, medical, drug and alcohol, mental health, legal and other services"

"The women we support are predominantly long term homeless women, who have little family and community support. Many of the women have lived transient lifestyles impacted by issues such as domestic violence; history of sexual assault; mental health; drug and alcohol use, and come from a variety of diverse backgrounds"

WIPAN recently needed some clothes for a women client who, due to bail conditions, was unable to buy any clothing post-release. After calling [WAGEC](#) and discussing her situation they invited us to come to their service and collect a large bag of clothing for her. We found the women workers to be very warm and welcoming and their donations to our client incredibly generous. We would like to thank [WAGEC](#) for the fantastic service and support that they offer women and girls.

## 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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