



SDN Newsletter - April 2020

Oh, what a crisis!

The world as we knew it has been turned up-side-down. Seventy years of prosperity since the end of WW2 is being hijacked. By nature. Nature so ruthlessly destroyed in pursuit of greed has called Time! The growth game is over, at least for now. The main theme in this newsletter is what's on every thinking and fair-minded person's mind – *'How do we build a better world when all this is over?'* We invite your ideas. Follow the link which takes you to the SDN HUB where you can record your hopes for a better future. Your ideas will be visible to others and will inspire them and create interest. When ready, click here: sdnhub.org.au/our-ideas

SDN Zoom session invite

Millions of people are using Zoom and so are we! We are scheduling a Zoom meeting for SDN people on Friday 1 May at 11am AEST (May Day, a significant date!) If you would like to participate, please send an email to harry.creamer@hotmail.com so I can include you on the list and have your current email to send you the vital meeting link. You need a mobile phone or a computer/laptop/tablet which has a microphone and a camera. You do not need to have an account with Zoom or have the Zoom app installed - clicking on the link will automatically install any software required.

The 2020 SDN workshop

This took place in January at the Don Bosco Retreat Centre Lysterfield, east of Melbourne. It was an ideal venue – accommodation on site, large meeting room, well-equipped kitchen and spacious dining room, set in delightful pastoral surrounds of paddocks, elegant gum trees and giant granite rocks.

There were fourteen participants: six women and eight men. Three were younger than 45, three in their 50s, four in their 60s, and four in their 70s or 80s. Seven had attended an SDN workshop before, but for seven this was their first experience. We came from Melbourne, Canberra, other NSW and South Australia, working in areas like restorative practice, climate change and sustainability, community development, and Indigenous communities.

We formed an instant family of friends, sharing our thoughts, emotions, hopes and fears, in an atmosphere of trust and support. The range of topics covered in presentations was outstanding. Restorative practice in the ACT, the Uluru Statement, ageing, money and society, theories of change, feedback loops, story-telling, 'Love, culpability and responsibility', intimate relationships, imagining the future (2100), and a Truth Mandala. As SDN grows there will be more workshops like this one. Don't miss the next!

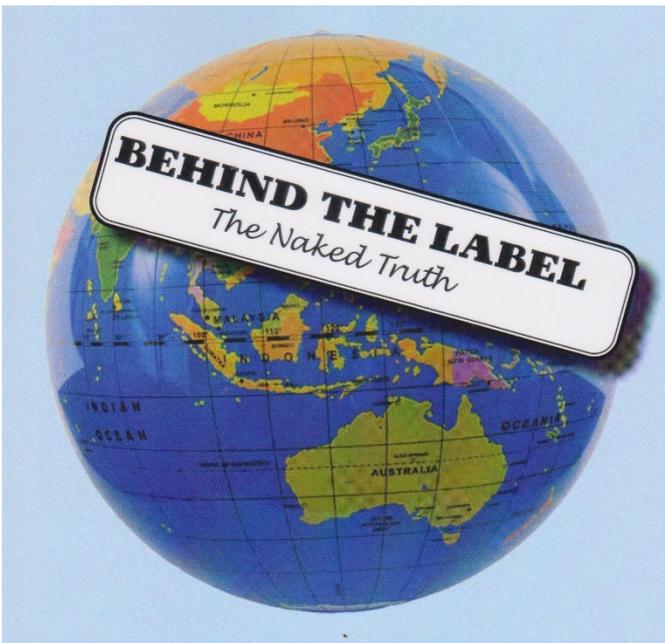


Participants at the 2020 SDN workshop near Melbourne

The Naked Truth

Joan McCarthy

Veteran SDNer Joan Morgan McCarthy (seen in the photo above wearing a purple sweater) has published her fifth book. *Behind the Label: The Naked Truth*, is a light-hearted look at the way clothes are used for fun, power and subjugation. The book exposes the way clothes affect our lives personally and environmentally. For more information and to purchase a copy go to - marjobooks.com.au/behind-the-label.asp



Quietness in Corona Time

Ray Rauscher

It's quiet. Quieter than I have ever experienced. It's corona quiet, a new definition of solitude. Should I relish the experience? Soak it up, not fight it, nor pray to God for it to end? This quietness is asking me to live by new rules. It's in control where I was always in control. I would make noise when I felt like it. I need my loud music but now even an Andre Rieu violin piece would be intrusive. I feel refreshed.

The coronavirus has freed my doormat - a new privacy is remarkably nice. No door-to-door salespeople. No front door deals for cheaper electricity and no real estate agents. No Jehovah's. It's so quiet I'll need to gather courage to open the door. I wonder if civilisation is still around? Walking down my path I feel an aloneness. Will there be survivors around? I step into the street with a lightness, gaining confidence. No cars honking me off the road - a new pedestrian power!

I feel like a jail bird escaping - can I face people again? I walk past homes with shutters down. How are they coping? Stay home. Like Moses' tablets, the government has laid down the law. Exercise, your only excuse for being out. I see someone ahead - here are neighbours I never met. Hello, your name? I'm developing new social skills. Wonder what my smile looks like? Strangers are now life rafts of existence. We walk in this alien setting, our new bubble of life. Caring is an expected new - learn it. This will end I know. Just now I'll stock up on new habits. When the noise returns I'll need a new set of armour - I've tasted the freedom of quietness.

An opportunity we must not squander

Mary Porter

The Queen in Alice in Wonderland said that one should believe in six impossible things to do before breakfast, or something like that - my point being, I always believe something is possible before being proved otherwise. If someone says, 'I keep trying that and it doesn't work', maybe it's the manner in which one approaches the issue, the communication between you and whoever you are trying to get on board, or perhaps the route taken. All of us who believe in the restorative approach realise there are many issues that are being tackled from the wrong end so to speak.

I wrote this in 2014 when I was in the ACT Legislative Assembly. The essence of restorative practice is simple - human beings are happier, more productive and more likely to make positive changes when those in authority do things with them, rather than to them or for them. Terry O'Connell wrote to me in August 2017:

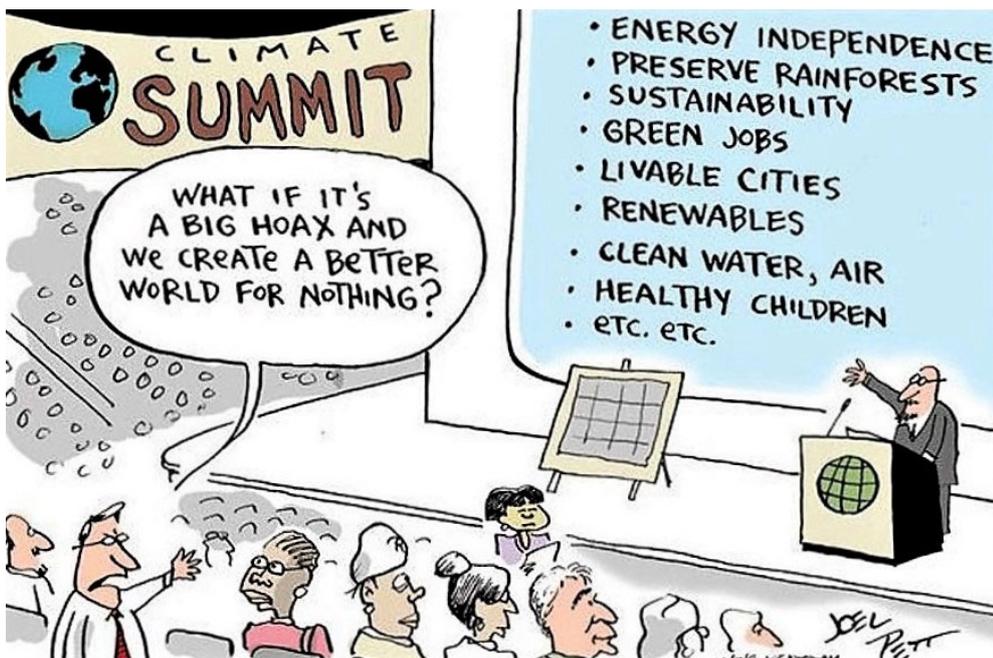
What keeps us out of relationships is vulnerability. Restorative practice creates conditions that allow us to sit with the discomfort of our vulnerability so we can:

- Make sense and meaning on what has happened or is happening.
- Work out what is important.
- Identify what needs to change, and our part in that process.
- Develop a capacity to build and sustain healthy relationships.

The world is experiencing challenges to the way we live, to our very existence. We have been facing the threat of climate change for a long time, and now we have this new threat to our survival - Covid 19. At times of great danger individuals try to protect themselves, sometimes at the expense of others, or to blame others, and we may even pretend it isn't a reality.

We are being forced behind closed doors, cut off from loved ones and friends, even as some die alone. Many are losing their livelihoods, or continue work under difficult circumstances. There is a growing need to reach out to each other, to connect, to support and be supported, in whatever ways we can through our virtual connections. While social distancing we yearn for touch, the hugs of our loved ones, and long to share a meal with friends, to gather for family celebrations, and for social and religious expression.

As we chart our way through this, it is clear to me that this is a time to restore community. As Terry says, 'Work out what is important. Identify what needs to change and our part in that. Develop a capacity to build and sustain healthy relationships. This is an opportunity we must not squander - let us embrace it.



The Reset Reading Group

Chris Larkin

There is a new program, the [Reset Reading Group](#), hosted by the Commons Social Change Library. Over six fortnights, starting in May, they will bring you readings, podcasts and short films to stimulate discussions about how we can build a better world and what it might look like. They help you set up your own group or join one with others around the country to talk about ideas and think about how to be part of making change.

The program is free - all you need to do is [register](#), set up or join a group, do the readings, and get stuck into conversations! You can even dip in or out. We can use this extraordinary moment to deepen our knowledge of political change-making. If we are to 'reset' the world instead of 'snap back', we need to be ready to make it happen.

NED grants program

Lesley Shuttleworth

NED supports projects in Australia contributing to:

- building a life-enhancing, inclusive ethos
- improving linkages, mutual acceptance and co-operation
- maximising our human potential at the levels of:
 - the individual person
 - communities everywhere

- global society
- steering ourselves towards a future for our planet, by building capacity to foster and support social change. Our work with SDN is complementary to the work through the grants program
- promoting and supporting Restorative Practice
- promoting and supporting Regenerative Practice.

We are supportive and flexible, and our grants manager offers advice on project development and submissions. To find out more contact Lesley Shuttleworth on 0428 488 215 or e-mail lesley@borderlands.org.au Our funding guidelines can be found on our website www.ned.org.au If you have an idea for a project or are supporting another group please contact Lesley to discuss this.

Two Brothers Walking

David Salomon

In mythically-grounded First Nations cultures such as Australia's, Dreaming Ancestors which arise from country are personifications of universal energies that inform human consciousness in time and space. The human brain is a function of that consciousness. For scientific-based cultures it is the other way around - the brain is the source of consciousness which focuses and directs creative energy. This key unlocks an understanding of my documentary *Two Brothers Walking*, as two men work to maintain *Tjukurpa* (Pitjantjatjara) and *Nguuikurra* (Kuku Yalanji). These refer to the body of traditional knowledge, ritual, language and life-ways that arise from country. Here it is on ICTV Play - ictv.com.au/video/item/3099

CD-QLD conference

Tina Lathouras

Tina is a Senior Lecturer in Social Work at the University of the Sunshine Coast.

The 2019 conference of Queensland Community Development will always be memorable for me. The theme was *A Place for Everyone* and provided opportunities to grapple with what that really means. One colleague told me:

It was a great way for me to reconnect and meet some new people around the ridges. I reckon there were at least seven generations of CD practice present. That's gotta have some fecund richness and nourishing depth to it. Such fresh aliveness. New perspectives. Young/er energy. Leading from an emerging future, in their own sweet ways.

Highlights were the Nundah Co-op giving the keynote address and sharing their amazing story of social enterprise. The Nguluwa Dhiyaan Dancers welcomed us to Country and helped with the Yarning Circle where we talked about the Uluru Statement from the Heart, and how CD practitioners can advance this important process.

We learnt from our CD 'elders' Anthony Kelly and Carmel Daveson, who provided a framework for how we could think more critically with these provocations – 'Embracing inclusion when it is not popular'; 'Building relationships when it is difficult'; 'Giving voice when there is silence'; and 'Unlocking the power of truth when it is uncomfortable'.

I attended an 'embodied' process using applied theatre techniques with Borland-Sentinella, and with 100 others I participated in a wonderful exploration of how Place makes us, with Gerard Dowling and Peter Westoby in Queens Park, Toowoomba. The final highlight was the conference close - after

thanking the hard-working organisers we celebrated news of the closure of tourists being able to climb Uluru.

A final observation. There's so much thirst for community development knowledge out there in the sector and we need to keep doing these conferences! I came away feeling a sense of camaraderie and deep care.



Members of the Nundah Co-op on the stage at the CD-QLD conference last October

Venues - do you have any ideas for a good venue for SDN workshops? We are particularly interested in Brisbane or south-east QLD where we hope to run the 2021 SDN workshop (if the C-19 crisis allows us!) Contact Harry on the 'Zoom' email above.

A useful reference in this time of pandemic - Beyond Blue Support Service - beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak

And finally, a new word - *flawsome* – the ability to recognise our flaws and rise above them. Heard on ABC RN Life Matters, 21/4/20 - abc.net.au/radionational/programs/lifematters/personality-types-in-lockdown-and-dolls-house-forensics/12167686

For more information on SDN, go to sdn.ned.org.au