



## SDN Newsletter – February 2021

The SDN belongs to you - without you there is no SDN. And email newsletters are now back in vogue according to a recent episode of ABC RN's *Download This Show*, so what are we waiting for?!

### Stop press - SDN workshop rescheduled

The annual SDN Workshop is rescheduled for 23-28 April in Armidale. The venue is the classy Hannas Arcade, Beardy Street. The Network will accommodate attendees in a motel within easy walking distance, and the workshop will be catered for, with evening meals at nearby restaurants. Registration costs stay the same, with concessions available.

For more information, see the flyer, look at the website, and/or contact:

Harry Creamer 0431 158 252: [harry.creamer@hotmail.com](mailto:harry.creamer@hotmail.com)

Michael Maher 0427 510 372: [mmaher@bluepin.net.au](mailto:mmaher@bluepin.net.au)

### A small workshop with a big heart

Despite 2020 being a year of logistical difficulty we were able to run a small regional SDN workshop on the mid north coast of NSW last September. A suitable venue was found (the *Falls Forest Retreat*: [www.fallsretreat.com.au](http://www.fallsretreat.com.au)) and a notice sent out to 170 people, of which only 5 were already on the SDN database. Seven attended, plus the SDN Coordinator, a total of 8 at the workshop. Topics ranged from ancient philosophers to neo-liberalism, personal life stories, learning an Aboriginal language, and a book review, *See What You Made Me Do* by Jess Hill. For more information see the SDN website - <https://sdn.ned.org.au/>



Participants at the Falls workshop near Port Macquarie in September

### **Restorative practice and NED**

The NED Foundation is committed to fostering the growth of restorative practice (RP) across society with the aim of nurturing and sustaining a community of practice, and facilitating networking between practitioners. The SDN website has more information on RP within NED and across the Network - <https://sdnhub.org.au/restorative/resources>

Dr Kristin Reimer received a NED grant to research RP in schools, and she's now put up a website including the school she researched as part of her grant: <https://restorativeschoolsaustralia.org/>.

And here is the video from one of the schools involved in her research (featured on her site): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMkt6FPXcVE>.

Another website is about cultivating a restorative culture in the classroom: <https://www.monash.edu.au/education/teachspace/articles/how-to-use-restorative-justice-in-your-classroom-and-school>

And if you live in Victoria, you can join the new Facebook group: [Restorative Practice in Victorian Schools](#) which supports educators to build restorative cultures and form collaborative relationships.

### **Covid thoughts continued**

A pandemic should not be an invitation for pandemonium. It's a wake-up call and when it ends, there should be no return to business-as-usual. That's just not working for masses of the world's population, for democracy, or for the environment and the climate. What's needed is to build back better.

A pandemic can be a time of creative isolation. Did you know that the theories of gravity and motion were developed while Isaac Newton was working from home during the Great Plague? Or that Shakespeare wrote *King Lear* while theatres were shuttered due to disease? What have you been up to, creatively? Let me have your stories for the next SDN newsletter.



## **Homo deus – why we need stories**

I'm reading a book recommended by fellow SDNer Karla Meyer in Armidale - *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow* by Yuval Noah Harari (YNH). He also wrote *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*. After a long introduction and too many words, suddenly a breakthrough on page 144! *Intersubjective Reality*. That's it, two words, with massive significance. We are all familiar with *subjective reality* (how we feel as an individual), and *objective reality* (what actually exists). YNH introduces us to a third reality, intersubjective reality.

This is the construction of reality we hold true, for the time being. It's the stories we share. 'Humans use language to create new realities. People weave a web of meaning, but sooner or later the web unravels'. Think gods, or the earth is flat, or the earth is the centre of the universe, or that communism is how we are meant to live (for Russians) or now for us, that neo-liberalism is the way. Even nations are intersubjective realities – the once mighty USSR was extinguished by a treaty in 1991! Trumps' fake news and alternative facts also fit this third reality frame.

This explains why science is so often the loser to beliefs, religions and other cultural devices, because it relies on objective facts whereas our intersubjective realities are more powerful – they tell us what we want the world to be like, not always what it is like. Science alone cannot make a better world. It needs BOTH science AND humanities. Both facts and beliefs. YNH predicts that in future the line between facts and beliefs will blur. 'In the twenty-first century fiction might become the most potent force'. He might have added, 'again'. So, we Sapiens live in a triple-layered reality. Now that explains a lot.

## **SDNers unite!**

Another SDNer at Armidale, Kevin Dupe, is the CEO of Regional Australia Bank. He wrote this in his 2020 newsletter to bank customers:

Greetings to you amidst a global pandemic. Despite all the challenges we face, I am writing with positivity and a feeling of extreme gratitude for calling regional Australia home... regional Australians have stepped up to confront our challenges...

I'm hearing stories of the best of people during the worst of times. It's important to look to the future and take the positives where we can. I leave you with a simple message - be kind to yourselves, your family and friends and your colleagues. Look for opportunities to perform random acts of kindness.

Yet another Armidale SDNer, Siri Gamage, now retired from UNE, has blog called *New England Perspectives*. He has published an article about SDN – <https://newenglandnet.wordpress.com/2020/08/31/the-social-developers-network-sdn>

Siri has a Facebook group, *Postcolonial/De-colonial thought in the global south*, which also covers Indigenous issues. It's a group of social scientists and postgraduate students from around the world. If you are interested, send a request via Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/634295333788710/about>

From one would-be capital city to a real capital, Chris Larkin in Canberra recommends the new publication [Arena Quarterly](#). A complimentary copy is

attached as a PDF. Arena has a long tradition of promoting progressive broad left ideas and has close relations with the Greens and conservationists. Have a look and if you can, please do [take out a subscription](#). If you like Arena, let others know.

### **Australia's progress towards a renewable energy superpower**

Andrew Gunner attended the January 2020 SDN workshop near Melbourne. His passion for renewable energy is seen in his website - *Feedback Reigns: Effective Climate Action* (<https://www.feedbackreigns.net/>).

His presentation at the workshop was titled 'Australian progress to renewable energy superpower' and he has further developed this talk with support from other participants at the workshop. It's on his website, at <https://www.feedbackreigns.net/solutions/australia-a-renewable-energy-superpower/>

Here's an introduction:

Judging by Canberra politics, climate action is going nowhere, but look deeper. State and territory governments as well as some companies are investing in renewable energy to harness Australia's outstanding sun, wind, and mineral resources. Almost weekly there are significant developments. It's like a gold rush and arguably, Australia is becoming a renewable energy superpower.

One recent development has been the Fortescue Metals plan to (1) produce lots of renewable energy, more energy than the fossil fuel giant Chevron, (2) produce green hydrogen from this renewable energy, (3) use renewable energy to power their trucks, trains, and ships, and (4) produce green steel. Stunning!

Do share the link if you want. And if you know a group who may like to hear Andrew's presentation, his website describes how to arrange it.

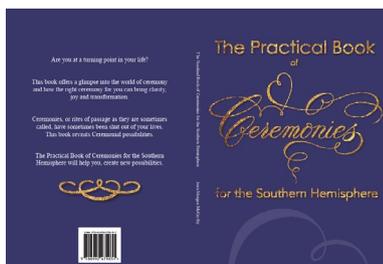
### **The Practical Book of Ceremonies**

**Joan McCarthy**

Veteran SDNer Joan Morgan McCarthy has done it again! She's published another book. *The Practical Book of Ceremonies for the Southern Hemisphere*, offers a glimpse into the world of ceremony and how the right ceremony can bring clarity, joy and transformation.

Ceremonies, or rites of passage as they are also called, are often shut out of our lives. This book will help you create new possibilities. For more information and to purchase a copy go to -

<https://www.marjobooks.com.au>



### **Finally**

Armidale environmentalist, poet and SDNer, Lynne Hosking has written a poem about the Pilliga. You can find it attached as a colourful JPG.

**The ABC** shone through the dark days of the mega bushfires, and is again showing how valuable it is in times of crisis. The ABC is a vital Australian institution, no matter what the situation, bringing out the best in us. Now GetUp has made a hard-hitting video in their campaign to save the ABC from a death by a thousand cuts. View it, share it, and let your MP know – no more cuts to the ABC in the May budget! - <http://getup.to/Q9AwOC8qjtorKIj>

**In case I forget** - we are all getting older. I recently completed the ANU dementia risk assessment tool - <https://anuadri.anu.edu.au/take-the-assessment.html?view=adri>

Why not check your score? You may be interested to know that my score was 'Low', so all being well, there will be a few more newsletters yet!

For more information on SDN, go to [sdn.ned.org.au](http://sdn.ned.org.au)



The image shows a banner for the Social Developers Network (SDN). On the left, the letters 'SDN' are written in a large, stylized, black font with a yellow outline. To the right of this is a circular logo with a green mountain peak, a blue sky, and a red sun. The words 'REFLECTION', 'SHARING', and 'PARTICIPATION' are written around the logo. Below the 'SDN' logo, the following contact information is listed: Harry Creamer, Coordinator (part-time), Social Developers Network, Port Macquarie NSW 2444, [harry.creamer@hotmail.com](mailto:harry.creamer@hotmail.com), 02 6582 6187; 0431 158 252. The banner has a yellow background with a decorative orange and yellow patterned border at the bottom.

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