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SDN Newsletter – May 2023

The Social Developers Network is entering a new phase. The challenge is how to broaden the appeal of SDN to attract a more diverse range of people, and how to grow the SDN offering while maintaining its core values.

SDN founder, Ned Icton, saw the network as a means to bring people together to explore issues in a meaningful and authentic way. He described the role of the community developer as helping people to achieve positive change that strengthens community life. He also saw the need for people to work on their own personal development.

This gives rise to two questions - What is social development? And who is a social developer? No doubt we each have our own views on this but it's worth asking ourselves these questions. When I did, I came up with a simple idea.

It is a willingness to engage in the world beyond our domestic comfort zones with a sense of social and environmental justice. This creates a commitment to making the world a better place. By accepting people where they're at, listening to each other, and providing a space for learning, SDN facilitates both theory and practical actions among its members.

Action on climate change, ranked #1 in the 2021 SDN survey, and action on the other issues in the survey - Australia's future, Indigenous matters, inequality, ageing, mental health, community engagement, neighbourhood development...

This newsletter features a report on the January workshop, the new SDN Collaborative Group, the Voice, and more. As they say these days, 'Enjoy!'

Feedback from the last newsletter

I was delighted to receive positive feedback to my lead article in the August 2022 newsletter. I mused on the benefits of 'Both, And' thinking in relation to the Voice. Thanks to Nona Harvey of Kempsey who emailed me:

So glad to read your comment Harry. I was most impressed by similar work done on this important subject by my old friend Jenny Macleod when she was Professor of Music at Victoria University of Wellington back in 1974. She made a similar point about the tendency of western thinkers for linear thinking (in terms of "EITHER...OR", setting boundaries that exclude other possibilities such as "BOTH...AND" or "NEITHER...NOR").

Not just an interesting philosophical notion but an important tool for analysis, as you ably demonstrate in applying it to your excellent critique of the conservative party's heinous approach to Aboriginal affairs.

And thanks too, to James Campbell of Port Stephens, NSW:

Thank you so much for keeping me in the loop, I really enjoyed reading the newsletter. Not sure if it's the first I have received but it is certainly the first time I have really read it and it was a joy on a sunny Sunday the last of this winter. Cheers Jim.

SDN workshops – see website - <https://sdn.ned.org.au/>

The 2023 annual SDN workshop was held in Armidale from 17-21 January. Sixteen people attended, making it one of the largest. It was also one of the most creative in recent times. A variety of presentations was on offer -

- Non Violent Communication.
- My search for Soul (soul collage cards).
- Visionary constellations.
- Come Latin dancing!
- Mapping Restorative Practice in Australia.
- Celebrating connections with country.
- Love, Power and Justice.
- Understanding billionaires.
- Reflections on my life.
- Emotional Freedom Transfer.
- My Place (the Stanthorpe project).
- My Buddhist Practice.
- 'Something & Nothing'.



Participants at the 2023 SDN workshop at Armidale after the creative session 'Council for All Beings' (note masks and music!)

Adelaide workshop in September

The next SDN workshop will be held at Riverdell Spiritual Centre north of Adelaide from 12-16 September. An invitation to attend will be sent to everyone on the SDN list soon as well as local people and groups.

Michael Maher comments on Mark Spain's video

During the 2022 workshop, film-maker David 'Sal' Salomon interviewed leadership development designer and facilitator Mark Spain about his experience of the workshop and SDN in general - <https://sdn.ned.org.au/>

This is how Michael Maher reflects on the video:

If you read Ned's book on SDN, you'll realise how everyone's experience is unique, and yet so essential to understanding the refractive effect that the prism of an SDN workshop engenders among participants. Ned grasped, in as many perspectives as people, what SDN is supposed to be. We also have the audio interviews that John Saward conducted in 2020. See – <https://hub.ned.org.au/sdn/interviews>

SDN Collaborative Group

A small group has been set up to broaden the appeal of SDN to attract a more diverse range of people and find ways to grow the scope of SDN offerings while maintaining our core values. Invitations to join the group were sent out to everyone on the SDN list in mid-February.

We are still keen to receive expressions of interest from SDN people in demographics not well represented, especially women and young people. By young we mean anyone under the age of 40, and preferably younger! A requirement of joining the group is that you have attended at least one SDN workshop.

If you are interested, please email us at sdn_admin@ned.org.au You can also use this email with any ideas you would like the group to discuss at the first meeting in a few weeks.

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Senator David Pocock meeting with SDNers
Jeanette and David Crew in Deniliquin

The Voice

If you are interested in being part of the campaign to secure a Yes vote in the referendum there are three Voice organisations you can join - Yes23, *Together*, Yes, and Start a Yarn:

<https://yes23.com.au/>

<https://togetheryes.com.au/>

<https://ulurustatement.org/education/start-a-yarn/>

The ABC has produced a terrific video that runs for 13 minutes about the Voice. It's called - [Everything you need to know about the Voice](#)

Yes23 has a very short [advert](#) already on TV. You can help keep up the momentum by sharing it with your family and friends. If you're keen and have time, here is a one hour recording of the recent [Together Yes meeting](#) led by Mary Crooks.

Indigenous leaders speak out

In her Boyer lecture, **Rachel Perkins** calls for an end of silence on Indigenous recognition. Listen [here](#).

Stan Grant has a new book, *'The Queen is Dead'*, in which he considers how Australia might more fully reckon with our colonial past and redefine our future including a just settlement with First Nations people. The link is [here](#).

And so to bed

It's a fact that many in the SDN community are getting on. Getting on well of course but also getting on in years. With this in mind I like to include items of interest (that may also be of interest to younger readers!) Click on these links to go to the articles:

[Tips for ageing well](#)

[How memory works](#)



SDN photo gallery - Ned, Mary, Gary, Elspeth, David, Michael, Jenny and Steve.

Storytime

On the SDN website, various people in the SDN network share initiatives over recent decades in building community. Hopefully these stories will stimulate others to be written and shared. You too can contribute your stories to this collection. Go to - <https://sdn.ned.org.au/stories>

Wishing you all a sunny autumn and warm winter. And don't forget – you can contribute to the next SDN newsletter – just email me your words and photos.



This newsletter was produced on the traditional lands of the Birrpai and Anaiwan people.