

# AVP WA NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2015



## Chairperson's 2014 Reflections

2014 has been another strong year for AVP WA. For me, it was another enjoyable year working with such a diverse and committed group of people. We have continued to build good relationships and support each other well in our work.

2014 milestones:

- The celebration of the twentieth anniversary of AVP in Western Australia. We held a celebratory event in Moore River in May, reflecting on our strengths and where we would like to grow.
- We ran 43 workshops in a range of locations, including four prisons, two schools, in Aboriginal communities, with youth groups, and community workshops.
- The National Gathering in Brisbane in January with four AVP WA members attending, and the International Gathering in Ireland in July, with seven AVP WA members attending. AVP WA members had significant input into both programmes, and it was clear that the Western Australian AVP programme is highly regarded internationally, and that sharing our experiences and what we have learnt is much appreciated.
- The evaluation of our AVP work at a local high school. The evaluation study indicates that AVP made a significant and positive impact on those involved, both students and staff.
- The appointment of Mark Newhouse, who works as a paid administrator one day a week. Mark's role is mainly to coordinate our workshops programme, and this has considerably lightened the load of others, which means we can explore new avenues.
- A strong Management Committee with eight members, meeting monthly.
- Regularly monthly training nights, and biannual training days in Acacia prison.
- Ongoing work in AVP Kimberley, reaching more Aboriginal communities with 15 active apprentice facilitators.



I look forward to the challenges and rewards that 2015 holds for us. We will continue to explore ways to support our facilitators and grow AVP. On a personal note, I enjoyed my involvement in AVP WA last year. Attending both the National Gathering in Brisbane and the International Gathering in Dublin, this year I have gained the perspective that our work here in Perth is part of an international, dynamic movement that really is making a difference around the world.

### Upcoming workshops

May 2 -3 Community Advanced  
May 22 - 24 Acacia (protections) Basic  
June 5 - 7 Acacia (mainstream) Basic  
June 20 - 21 ASeTTS Basic  
July 4 - 5 Community T4F

## 2015 National Gathering

The 2015 National Gathering was held at the beautiful Queen's College in Melbourne from the 1<sup>st</sup> January this year. AVP facilitators from Western Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales attended the gathering, which was held in close association with the Quaker Yearly Meeting at the same venue.

It was great to share successes and learnings with each other and explore new ways of approaching the work we do to make it even more effective. As Amy says, it is "clear that the Western Australian AVP programme is highly regarded . . . and that sharing our experiences and what we have learnt is much appreciated."

It was interesting to hear stories of the recent International Gathering in Dublin, as well as the wonderfully inspiring work the Friends Peace Teams are doing in Nepal and the Philippines.



AVP groups are being encouraged to become members of AVP International. The benefits are that groups have the support of a global organisation for the work we do in the community, prisons and organisations. Membership also provides benefits such as being included on the AVP International website, free hosting for local AVP websites, fundraising assistance, discounts on gathering registration fees for member group facilitators and direct contact with AVP International to receive the latest news from the organisation.

The next AVP National Gathering will be held at Silver Wattle Quaker Retreat Centre near Canberra from Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> to Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2016. This will allow participants to be involved in the annual Peace Convergence in Canberra if they wish to.

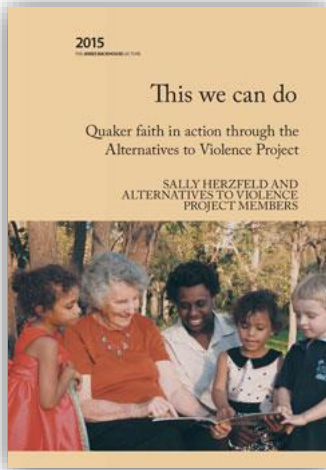
### **AVP and the recent Nepalese earthquake**

John, Maxine and their teams were facilitating two AVP workshops on the top (5<sup>th</sup> floor) of a building in Kathmandu when the first of the recent tragic earthquakes occurred. They are ok, but it was a horrific experience for all and they are currently living amid enormous chaos.

Amazingly, according to John, "Spirits seem to be high although many individuals are facing tragedy and uncertainty."

Thankfully, we believe all Nepali AVP facilitators are safe. Our hearts go out to all affected, and we wish our team a speedy and safe journey home as soon as possible.

## Backhouse Lecture



The James Backhouse Lecture, commonly known as the Backhouse Lecture, is a public lecture on contemporary issues delivered annually at the national gathering of Quakers in Australia.



The lecture is given in memory of James Backhouse (pictured right), who walked around a great deal of eastern and southern Australia to enquire into the condition of the penal settlements in Australia and the welfare of the Aborigines and the free settlers. He had as his travelling companion George Washington Walker, and there is no doubt that the visit of these two Friends marked the beginning of the history of Friends in Australia.

This year, our very own Sally Herzfeld delivered the lecture at the Quaker yearly meeting which overlapped with the AVP national gathering in Melbourne.

Quakers have had a big influence on the AVP from its beginning in 1975, which is consistent with their commitment to find nonviolent ways to respond to conflict. In this lecture, drawing on long experience, Sally outlined the remarkable development of AVP within prisons, schools and community groups and its spread to about 60 countries. In true AVP style there were moments of audience interaction and some young friends who acted their roles as “authority figures” very enthusiastically.



Sally explained the philosophy and processes used in AVP workshops in a way that made it clear why this approach has changed many lives and helped build more peaceful communities.

The audience was deeply moved when facilitator Nick Vassallo told his story on video.



After the lecture, Sally said, “It was definitely a team presentation and that’s what made it entertaining. I had loads of support and really felt the benefit of team work. My son, John especially spent days helping me during the year and on THE day and night.”

We were all very proud of Sally, Nick and all the support team but mostly of SUPER SAL!! An inspirational night to remember!!!

Copies of the lecture and book are available [here](#).



## Training nights at Mt Lawley

Joy and Jim Thom's decision to take off on an international adventure (which naturally includes a thorough visit to Bonnie Scotland, the land of Jim's birth), meant a vacancy occurred for planning and presenting AVP training nights.

This coveted position has been taken up by Mark Newhouse and Peter Fry, who have so far presided over the first two evenings and have plans for future evenings of learning mixed with FUN, an essential element of any AVP work.

The first evening focused on Transforming Power as the centrepiece of the evening as it is for AVP, and even wove into it an L & L, where participants were encouraged to act out aspects of the Mandala and guides in Charade form. As usual L & L meant Lots of Laughs.



The most recent evening gave a large circle of facilitators the chance to view extracts of Sally's Backhouse lecture, with opportunities to ask questions, make comments and join in the L & Ls which were part of Sally's presentation.

Some plans are being considered for future training evenings, and we encourage any facilitator who has ideas (especially if

you could present or co-present them) to contact Mark or Peter (details below) who will happily support your initiative.

Some possibilities are . . .

- The Dos and Don'ts of processing exercises.
- Trying new exercises we haven't used before.
- The purpose, value and process of getting feedback after sessions.
- The agenda for a workshop prep session.
- Purpose, value and use of previous reports during prep.
- The International aspect of AVP.
- An exercise under the microscope.
- Dealing with difficult situations.

### Next training day Acacia 9<sup>th</sup> May

The men really appreciate our visits, so if you are a facilitator, please try to come.

**Remember - check your clearance is current.**

## A word from Jaunty Jo Vallentine

AVP rang bells with me when I heard Stephen Angell talk about it at a Quaker conference in Tokyo in 1985. I had another life going at that time, so just put it "on hold" thinking I'd love to get it going in W.A., when I was more home based.

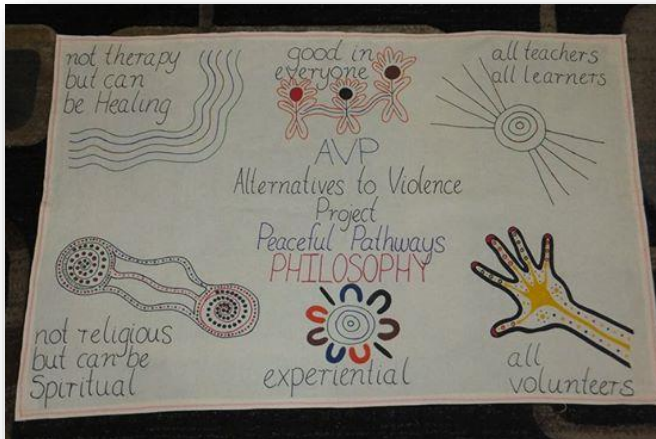
In 1984, started conversations going with Friends in Perth, got a little committee going to make plans, and invited some east coast facilitators over to train us. Then blessed to have Stephen Angell and Ben Norris from U.S.A., and the wonderful Elaine Dyer (Aotearoa) come over to guide us through our first prison workshop in Casuarina in 1985. The rest, as they say, is history. It's been an inspiring journey for me, and continuing, although not quite so much direct involvement as in the past. So glad that AVP-WA is strong and effective. Such wonderful people making positive waves in the community! (Sally made Jo's stunning cake as a token of our gratitude to Jaunty Jo for all her involvement in the committee over the years. The cake was enjoyed by a big mob on training night in April.)



## AVP Kimberley celebrated its 40th workshop ☺

The Alternatives to Violence Project in the Kimberley is making way. Four years after an introductory workshop in the Broome Regional Prison a team of mostly local facilitators have achieved the delivery of 40 workshops in Broome and the Kimberley.

AVP provides workshops around peaceful conflict resolutions that are active, fun and get the message across. Participants share their experiences and gain practice and skills in different ways of dealing with conflict. AVP runs workshops in prisons, schools and communities all over the world.



A series of community workshops at all levels: Basic, Advanced and Training 4 Facilitators, have led to a team of 15 local facilitators. Half of the team is Aboriginal. Most of the facilitators volunteer their time and effort to share what they felt was a good experience. 'Attending the workshops really made a difference to me and I want others to be able to have this too' one of the current lead facilitators said. The AVP workshops were highly popular in the Wankutjunka,

Balgo and Noonkanbah communities which repeatedly ask for 'more AVP workshops please'.

In our region AVP Kimberley has delivered 9 workshops in both the Broome and West Kimberley Regional Prison so far. This year, with a steady population in WKRP, we aim to train inmate facilitators who can perpetuate the successful formula of the workshops and be positive role models. 11 Kimberley women have participated in the Basic level workshop last week and most of them seek to move on to the Advanced level course to ultimately become facilitators. The men are also eager to have another go. Previous inmate facilitators throughout the world have later joined local teams, as it happens in Perth. That is what AVP strives for: locals sharing experiences with other locals to increase the peace in our communities.

Two workshops have taken place in Broome Senior High School with teachers being taken by surprise at the change in students whilst partaking in the workshop. Two new students coming from remote communities to BSHS said the workshop enabled them to truly connect with the existing group and made them feel safe and accepted in a matter of days. This year we will do more in local high schools, so watch this space.

Anyone interested in attending a workshop or being involved with AVP Kimberley, please contact us via [avpkimberley@gmail.com](mailto:avpkimberley@gmail.com)

Astrid  
AVP Kimberley - Peaceful Pathways



## From Subhash – AVP Nepal

[Subhash volunteered to be co-ordinator of the AWP region and will be doing a lot of the organising of the next IG in Nepal. AVP WA donated \$600 towards his computer.]

*Dear Sally, Nadine, John and friends in FPT AWP*

*I am writing to thank you all for your kind sharing of resources to arrange a laptop and internet connection facility needed for the works I am volunteering with AVP Nepal, AVPI, and FPT AWP.*

*Thank you Sally - for your prompt response and initiation to find and share some resource while I asked you.*

*Thank you Nadine - for your honest willingness to make things happen in best possible way.*

*Thank you John - for getting involved in this process from the begging, facilitating the process and finally making it possible in reality.*

*Please thank on my behalf to all the friends/Friends who have contributed silently for this need.*

*The machine I received is perfect to serve the necessity. I hope it will serve long enough.*

*Thank you again*

*In friendship*

*Subhash*



## Friends Peace Teams - Asia West Pacific

The Asia West Pacific Initiative of Friends Peace Teams, formerly the Indonesia Initiative, seeks to connect communities of conscience around the world with communities in the Asia West Pacific to provide opportunities for conscientious service. Building mutual friendships requires entering other worlds – worlds very different from our own and finding our common humanity. Currently, we work with survivors of war and violence, community members, teachers and young people, who are committed to peace, do not support war or violence, and do not

take sides. We share a faith . . . across religion, class and culture . . . in the power of a Living Spirit to give life, joy, peace, and prosperity through love, integrity and compassionate justice among people who live in simplicity and equality. We all this our real work – seeking to live with clear consciences and to connect communities of conscience.

We currently visit in Indonesia, Nepal, the Philippines, Australia, Israel and Palestine, with a concern for friends in Aotearoa/New Zealand, Afghanistan, Chechnya, the Ukraine and Korea and welcome connections in other countries in Asia Pacific.

Our work focuses on principled, people-to-people friendships, as well as Alternatives to Violence Project training in transforming power, trauma resiliency, developmental play, sustainable livelihoods, discernment and conscience.



## A Goosebumps story from Roger in Seattle USA

Saturday, April 18, 2015:

*Char Carroll and I have recently started doing workshops in the County Jail in Tacoma, WA for veterans. Recently we did not have enough new veterans so did a workshop for 16 trustees in their pod.*

*Two days later we got this message from the 2<sup>nd</sup> in command at the jail:*

*"Today we had formal jail inspections and one of the units we inspected was the trustee unit. I have to say and Lt. ++++ agrees that it was the best we have ever seen that unit. Then we went to the kitchen and the trustees had everything clean and were working hard and in a good mood.*

*"I seriously believe the change in their behaviour is from the anger management classes we have offered them. They are looking at life differently and are more positive now. They are now treating each other with respect. Those classes are making a difference."*

*One workshop for 16 among 70 guys – and they see the change!*

*Roger*

*Seattle*

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### Editor's note

This is my first AVP-WA newsletter. I had big shoes to fill after Debi's wonderful work, and I hope you enjoy reading it. Loving thanks Debi for all your fantastic newsletters over the years. I am now beginning to comprehend what goes into creating a newsletter!!

I intend to publish a newsletter every quarter, so if you have any news or photos you would like to share for future publications, please send them to me [selene15@dodo.com.au](mailto:selene15@dodo.com.au).

In peace and gratitude,

Selene Moonbeams



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### Contact details

For details of upcoming workshops or training nights, volunteer to help facilitate a workshop, or just to find out more about AVP, please contact

Mark Newhouse (Administrator and workshop co-ordinator) – 9272 1268 or 0400 231 151 or [marknewh@inet.net.au](mailto:marknewh@inet.net.au)

Amy Thom (Chairperson) – 0417 245 881 or [amypatriciathom@gmail.com](mailto:amypatriciathom@gmail.com)

Sally Herzfeld (Treasurer) – 9299 6788 or 0478 620 145 or [sallyherzfeld@ozemail.com.au](mailto:sallyherzfeld@ozemail.com.au)

Peter Fry (Training night co-ordinator) - [pjfry@inet.net.au](mailto:pjfry@inet.net.au)