



# Vantage

Women's Planning Network

October 2006 Update

## Your 2006-07 Committee

Our AGM for the year was held on Sunday 17th September 2006 at the Southern Cross Hotel in South Melbourne. Following the President's and Treasurer's reports for the past year, office bearers for 2006-07 were elected. Your WPN committee for this year is:

<i>Kellie Burns</i>	<i>President</i>
<i>Melinda Wealands</i>	<i>Vice President</i>
<i>Lecki Ord</i>	<i>Treasurer</i>
<i>Shannon Lea</i>	<i>Committee member</i>
<i>Bronwen Hamilton</i>	<i>Committee member</i>
<i>Gilda di Vincenzo</i>	<i>Committee member</i>
<i>Claire Merlo</i>	<i>Committee member</i>
<i>Denise Underwood</i>	<i>Committee member</i>
<i>Jode Cowie</i>	<i>Administration</i>

Congratulations to everyone for their commitment to the WPN for the year ahead. We are keen to co-opt further members who were unable to attend the AGM, in order to expand our activities. And if what was talked about at the AGM is anything to go by, there are plenty of events to organise, a research project to finalise and lots of networking to be done, which will keep the committee very busy!

## Recent Events

### AGM - Catriona MacDiarmid

Following the formalities of the AGM, Catriona MacDiarmid, of EcoProperty spoke to the group about a broad range of topics, including how she developed her business, challenges of the industry, mentoring and work-life balance to name just a few!

Catriona runs an 'eco' real estate company that offers advice and a service to people wanting to build, sell or renovate eco properties in Australia. Catriona and her business partner enjoy the challenge of working this into the real estate market, although have found their share of challenges when it comes to dealing with the real estate industry.

Catriona spoke about her passion for mentoring, and the importance of recognising balance in your life. Thanks Catriona, for an inspiring discussion and lots of food for thought!

## What's happening with WPN?

As we start another Spring, we also welcome the new WPN committee for 2006-07. There are many great plans for the year ahead, but we have a few things that are highest on the agenda to complete before we enter 2007:

### WPN Research Project - A Tool kit for Affordable Housing for Women

The Research Project is extremely close to completion, and we are very excited about releasing it to a wider audience in the very near future. Keep a close watch on our website and through our email updates for the research report and practice notes, which we will be launching early in the new year.

### Planning Week 2006 - Womens Map Walk Wednesday 18 October 2006

We are excited to have been a supporter of the production of the first Women's Map of Melbourne, and as it is soon to be reprinted, we have decided to ask Celestina Sagazio from the National Trust to take us on a walking tour of some of the sites of significance to women in Melbourne for Planning Week 2006 (and as our contribution to 'Walktober'). We hear she has some interesting and somewhat disturbing tales to share, so RSVP to [admin@wpn.org.au](mailto:admin@wpn.org.au) now!

While the event is free, we ask for a \$5 donation which will go to the reprinting of the Women's Map of Melbourne.



Enjoying the AGM and Brunch at the Southern Cross Hotel

## London calling

### *Our trip to the Women, Planning and Design: International conference*

Lecki Ord, Bron Hamilton and myself were lucky enough to travel to London for the **Women, Planning and Design: International Perspectives** conference back in June, and needless to say we had a great time! The London Women and Planning Forum ([http://www.lwpm.org/seminar\\_international1.htm](http://www.lwpm.org/seminar_international1.htm)) invited WPN to speak about the Network generally, but we felt it was also the perfect opportunity to talk about a couple of things WPN are very proud of – the Mentoring program, and our research. We had a fantastic response to our presentation, with people really interested in the network and what we do, which was great to see.

The conference itself was inspiring. Guests from Turkey, Africa, Canada, Germany and the UK spoke about a variety of topics centred around two key areas: Planning and Women. The conference was set in Bethnal Green, a culturally diverse part of London, and was introduced by **Baroness Uddin** of Bethnal Green, the first Muslim woman to enter the House of Lords. The Baroness provided an inspiring opening, speaking about the need for women to be ‘championed’ as design professionals, and to use their skills and knowledge in creating places that are people and family-friendly.

**Susan Parham** from the London School of Economics shared with us a new phrase – ‘**star-architecture**’, referring to the dominance of the male ‘stars’ of architecture (ie. Rem Koolhaas) in large projects. She questioned their dominating role in major design projects, when often they are not well versed in local knowledge and the way people use the particular spaces (but they have the name, so therefore they are ‘right’).

Of particular interest was **Arzu Kocabas**, a planner from Istanbul. Arzu spoke about the explosive growth of Istanbul (from 2 million people in the 1970s, to 9 million in the 1990s) and the subsequent impact of the 1999 earthquake on the city. With the previous population explosion, much housing was built on vulnerable land, and therefore the earthquake was extremely damaging. Through the process of rebuilding, the city has also been trying to keep up with the globalising economy, and is pushing to become part of the European Union. With this pressure, there is also the issue of using planning to maintain the culture and traditional lifestyles for women within the city, as well as encouraging the broadening of the role of women in Turkish society.

It was also fascinating to hear from **Olusola Olufemi**, who spoke about the perceptions, expectations and challenges of female planners in Africa. Research she has done indicates women planners are underrepresented, but also ‘invisible’ in terms of planning input and outcomes in most African countries. Their experiences are undervalued and their knowledge is excluded from policy and implementation, and they often leave the profession for unqualified positions due to this situation.

It was an intensive day, challenging, and very rewarding. There were a number of amazing women who spoke at, attended or ran the conference that were great to meet and talk to. By the end of the day we were exhausted, but of course managed to do some sightseeing on the way back to the hotel! We look forward to maintaining our relationship with the London Women and Planning Forum, and maintaining our links both virtually and in person.

*Melinda Wealands*



The conference delegates



Bron and Lecki - Brick Lane



Margot Huxley, Sophie Nichol  
Sauve and Lecki



Mel and Lecki in Bethnal Green



Lecki presenting



Delegates walk down Brick Lane