



**Business & Professional Women's Club of Port Moresby**

# Newsletter

**March, 2009 (No 2, 09)**



## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

March is a starting as a hectic month for BPW Port Moresby.

The theme for International Women's Day 2009 is "Unite to End Violence Against Women." To celebrate, BPW Port Moresby is holding an International Women's Day Breakfast on 5<sup>th</sup> March when Christina Kewa will give her views on the causes of gender based violence in PNG and what can be done to break the cycle. See the article in this newsletter for more information. I would particularly like to thank all the sponsors for supporting the breakfast – particularly AusAID and UNDP.

The response to the IWD Breakfast has been overwhelming and BPW has arranged for Christina to attend a special BPW meeting on Saturday 7 March to again speak. This meeting will also include the annual BPW Candlelighting Ceremony.

The April meeting is of course our AGM – and this is the opportunity to make changes to the Constitution. Motions for changes need to be submitted to the Executive ASAP so they can be circulated to members prior to the meeting. The AGM will be held on Saturday 4 April.

Finally, best wishes in your efforts to celebrate the achievements and contributions of women throughout the world on IWD. Let us take this as an opportunity to renew our commitment to meeting the challenges faced by women face in making further progress.

There are numerous websites on IWD, eg: <http://www.internationalwomensday.com/about.asp>

Judith Bona  
President

## MEMBERSHIP

Membership for 2009 is now open. Forms will be available at BPW meetings, at the BPW International Women's Day Breakfast and can be emailed from the secretary of BPW. Membership fee is K50.

## 2009 ACTIVITY SCHEDULE BPW POM

*PLEASE NOTE DATE CHANGES*

5 <sup>th</sup> March	International Women's Day Breakfast
7 <sup>th</sup> March	Candlelighting & IWD Celebration
4 <sup>th</sup> April	AGM
May	Women and HIV
June	Women and the Public Sector
July	Women and Academic Sector
August	Meet the recipients
Sept.	Women, Sports and Culture
October	Women and the Private Sector
Nov.	Gender Based Violence
Dec.	Christmas Function

## MARCH MEETING

BPW's next meeting will be held on Saturday **7<sup>th</sup> March** at Port Moresby International School, (cnr Bava Street and Boroko Drive - near Baptist church and St Joseph's Church and school).

Join in sharing some light snacks (brought by members) at **12 midday** and the meeting starts at 12.30-1pm.

This is a special meeting to celebrate the BPW International Candlelighting Ceremony and International Women's Day. Christina Kewa is the guest speaker.

Bring food to share, K2 entry fee, raffle money. Our monthly raffle raises a small amount towards our general funds. Anyone who would like to donate a prize for the raffle is welcome to bring it along on the day.

Donations to the BPW Scholarship Program for girls and women are also invited.



**International  
Women's Day**

## BPW CANDLELIGHTING CEREMONY

The BPW Candlelighting Ceremony was introduced over seventy years ago to evoke memories of the achievements of BPW since its establishment and to recognise the achievements of women internationally. It is the one formal BPW activity each year when members all over the world come together to remember BPW Clubs in over 80 different countries.

During the ceremony candles are lit to represent the International federation of BPW and the various countries where BPW is established. Candles are also lit to symbolise the ambitions and endeavours of dedicated women in many countries.

The ceremony is also an opportunity to reflect on the principles of BPW.

BPW Port Moresby has conducted memorable and moving candlelighting ceremonies since its establishment in 1982. The 2009 Candlelighting Ceremony is a highlight in the BPW calendar.

[http://www.bpw-international.org/pdf/2009\\_candle\\_lighting\\_ceremony\\_al\\_l\\_english.pdf](http://www.bpw-international.org/pdf/2009_candle_lighting_ceremony_al_l_english.pdf)

## DR MAXINE WHITAKER

Members of BPW were proud to hear recently that Dr Maxine Whitaker, a long term active BPW member, has accepted the position of Professor of International and Tropical Health at the University of Queensland in Australia.

The pride is, however tinged with some sadness, as it means that Maxine will not be such an active member of BPW Port Moresby.

Maxine first came to PNG in 1999. This was the culmination of a long term dream – and much planning and preparation. As an eight year old she had entered a competition with a trip to the Sepik as first prize. She came second and won a book on PNG, the first of many she read about the country.

By the time she was in Grade 8 Maxine knew that she wanted to work in the health sector where she could meet people, do things, make a difference – and travel. She discovered as a medical student that she loved paediatrics and obstetrics where there is a sense of continuity.

As a public health expert Maxine has worked in many countries: Zambia, Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, Philippines, Vietnam and now PNG. Projects have included urban health, rural health and maternal health. Maxine likes to understand the culture of the country she works in, to learn the language and hear

the stories of the people. In Vietnam, for example, she recognised the need to learn the language in order to better understand reproductive health. She needed to hear women's perceptions of the causes of reproductive health infections. So Maxine not only learnt to speak Vietnamese, she also learnt to write it for her PhD thesis – which incidentally was edited by her husband, Neville. The PNG Institute of Medical Research is now doing a study based on her work in Vietnam and Maxine hopes to get more involved in such studies with her new position.

Maxine is a valued member of BPW. She is always an active worker – ranging from handing out the sandwiches at functions to leading the club to develop a strategic plan. She values her time with BPW. She says, "It has given me an opportunity to work with women for women and to be hands on as distinct from working at a policy level. It reminds me of why I am really here." She also acknowledges the support she gains from other women and she values the friendships she has made.

Maxine will continue to have close links with PNG. She says, "I have gained so much living here. Its really exciting" Fortunately, as part of her new role Maxine is very likely to travel here and she is determined to ensure that some of those visits coincide with BPW meetings.



Dr Maxine Whitaker is farewelled by staff from CBSC & the National Dept of Health

## BPW FEBRUARY MEETING REPORT

As well as members of BPW the February BPW meeting was attended by scholarship recipients, some mothers and teachers and members of All Nations Women's Group. ANWG donated K10,000 to BPW to the BPW scholarship program to assist women and girls to fulfill their dreams. Dame Carol Kidu, Minister for Community development and a BPW founding member, Ms Margaret

Lokoloko, Gender and HIV Adviser from UNDP and Ms Christina Kewa, also attended. Dr Miriam O'Connor spoke on the topic of women and health. She reported:

- PNG has the highest mortality rate and the highest HIV prevalence rate in the Pacific
- Breast and cervical cancer are the leading causes of deaths for women
- Inadequate health facilities, supplies and insufficient health workers hinders basic health care for women and children in PNG.

Dr Luisa Kidu, who was featured in the February BPW Newsletter also attended the meeting with her sister Lily, a Psychology student. Dr Kidu manages the Kila Kila Urban Clinic.



Dr Luisa Kidu with a young patient & mother

During the meeting two DVDs were shown – the BPW International program and the BPW Port Moresby scholarships DVD.

*Isako Grace Feka*

**CAUSES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
IN PNG**

*The following is the text of a Press Release distributed to PNG Media this week*

Well known PNG businesswoman and journalist Christina Kewa, believes that there are three major issues that need to be addressed in order to ensure equality for women and to break the cycle of violence and abuse imposed on women and girls in Papua New Guinea. They are bride price, rape and polygamy.

She says these are deep, social-cultural issues that need to be uprooted in Papua New Guinea in order that the chains and cycle of oppression, violence, poverty, corruption and the yoke of injustice are broken completely.

She describes 'bride price' as "Papua New Guinea's "Price Tag System" that demoralizes and holds the PNG woman in a

Prison Culture and finally binds her with the yoke of injustice, while also imposing poverty on the men and the boy child."

She says 'rape' is Papua New Guinea's most 'normalised' criminal way of exercising inhuman sexual powers over a woman – and one where the perpetrator goes unpunished by the laws of the land, while the woman suffers injustice!

She further defines Polygamy as "PNG's deadliest cultural practice that suppresses a woman's right to enjoy her true identity, value, marriage and family life, and forces the man to rob private and public resources to make ends meet for multiple wives and many children. The consequences are too many and have a chain reaction on the young nation of Papua New Guinea."

Ms Kewa says, "Once the price tag gets on the woman, she becomes a labelled commodity in the man's house, while the man exercises illegal & unethical rights to marry more women, causing conflict and deadly situations in a marital and home environment where violence takes a very strong cause, not only with the man, but the women and children involved."

Ms Kewa is the guest speaker at an International Women's Day Breakfast to be hosted by the Business and Professional Women's Club of Port Moresby on 5th March. The breakfast is being sponsored by AusAID and the United Nations Development Program. Other sponsors for the breakfast include City Pharmacy, Deloitte, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Linden Blossom, and Gadens Lawyers.

International Women's Day is celebrated in March to recognise and celebrate the achievements of women. It is also a time to focus on the importance of continuing action to ensure that women's equality is gained and maintained in all aspects of life.

Ms Kewa highlights the key issues of bride price, rape and polygamy in her book "Being a Woman in Papua New Guinea." She sees these as the root causes of domestic violence affecting the girl child and women in PNG. She says, "These things must be done away with in PNG."

Her view is that there needs to be changes in women's education in PNG, together with a strong communications and media strategy to address the issues and find solutions. She comments, "These issues affect the core of traditional PNG, and this directly affects the development process of this young developing country. Funding agencies, the PNG legal sector and the

education sector need to address these issues to break the cycle.”

Ms Kewa makes it clear that she is not a human rights or woman's activist simply that she believes in justice.

Ms Kewa will also speak at a BPW general meeting to be held on 7th March, and at educational institutions including Don Bosco Technical School and Notre Dame Girls Secondary School, where she has introduced an educational scholarship to address the three key issues identified.

### NEWS FROM BPW INTERNATIONAL

*EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER FROM 1<sup>ST</sup> VICE PRESIDENT (MEMBERSHIP) Gabriella Canonica BPW International 2008 - 2011*

Dear Presidents and Members of BPW Worldwide,

Time has changed, new challenges have come up, and a new era has started. The challenge to lead BPW to a substantial increase of members is one of my top priorities.

Below you find my 3 point program as 1st Vice President and Chair Membership of BPW International.

**1 + 1 = the new Power of BPW** Or: myself and 1 new Member for BPW

We are absolutely convinced that each and every one of us can recruit ONE new member!

25,000 Members plus 1? = 50,000 Members! Wonderful outlook!

This sounds good - easy and feasible.....

**Open Eyes** Not only the recruitment of new members is important, but also holding on to our members has high priority in our program.

Be open to new ideas, challenges and learning processes. Review your models of recruitment, and your communication with members as well as your events / meetings and contents of these!

Close the gap between the generations. Accept and understand new words, new methods, and new horizons.

Find out about virtual networks; evaluate the benefit for you and for BPW! This will be a point for discussion!

**Face Lifting** To reach these goals it is necessary that our visual appearance, the content of our messages on the Internet / flyers and other virtual tools are thought over.....

Together we can make this happen for BPW - Of course we can!

### BPW INTERNATIONAL BENEFITS FOR MEMBERS

Source:<http://www.bpwinternational.org/services/bpw-services-benefits-for-members.htm>

- **UN Participation:**  
BPW members can be accredited to attend meetings at the United Nations as observers, enabling them to take back issues and policies for further lobbying in their respective countries.
- **Worldwide Friendship:**  
Members from five continents may connect with other BPW members globally through "**BPW Online**" digital network, "twinning" projects, conferences and International Congress.
- **Business & Member Pages:**  
Individual members can publicize their business and professions on [www.bpw-business.org](http://www.bpw-business.org).
- **The Recognition for Members:**  
BPW International website, [www.bpw-international.org](http://www.bpw-international.org), is a showcase for the accomplishments of BPW members, clubs and federations. BPW members may also be selected as experts in special fields or nominated for awards when opportunities arise.
- **Leadership Development:**  
BPW offers mentoring and leadership training for personal development. Young BPW members, aged 35 or younger, are also represented in BPW Executive Board at local, national and international levels.
- **Support for Projects:**  
BPW affiliates' capacity building projects for women may be selected as "BPW International Listed Projects." Such projects will be promoted in the international community to call for supportive resources.

*BPW Port Moresby is not currently a financial member of BPW International. Membership fees do not cover the cost of international membership and funds generated by BPW are used for the sole purpose of providing scholarships. BPW International is aware of the scholarship program and has been very supportive. Ideas on how to meet the cost of BPW International membership are invited.*

### BPW WEBSITE

<http://pngbpwa.wordpress.com>

### NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions, comments and photographs highly welcome, contact:  
[vivienc@pattaf.org.pg](mailto:vivienc@pattaf.org.pg)



## **International Women's Day**

*The Business & Professional Women's Club of Port Moresby thanks the following for their generous sponsorship and support for the International Women's Day Breakfast:*

**AusAID**  
**UNDP**  
**Deloitte**  
**City Pharmacy**  
**PricewaterhouseCoopers**  
**Gadens**  
**Linden Blossom**  
**ANZ**

The next BPW meeting will be held on Saturday March 7<sup>th</sup> at POMIS where Christina will be speaking again.  
International Women's Day is celebrated on March 8<sup>th</sup>.

