

Oxfam - Diamond Valley Newsletter



February 2009 Web: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~dvoxfam> Email:
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Oxfam Australia Diamond Valley Group

Next Oxfam-Diamond Valley meeting

8pm Friday 20th February 2009 at
Eltham Living and Learning Centre,
739 Main Rd Eltham

Beth Eggleston, who works for Oxfam, will speak about **Humanitarian Advocacy and Afghanistan**. She has recently returned from working for the UN in Afghanistan.

We will also spend some time planning for the rest of the year.

From the '**Mining Ombudsman case report: Rapu Rapu polymetallic mine**', published October 2008.

Authors: Shanta Martin and Kelly Newell

Australian-listed **Lafayette Mining Limited** began mining on **Rapu-Rapu island** in the Philippines in 2005, receiving financial support from a consortium of international banks, led by our **ANZ Bank**. Within six months of the start of operations, there were at least two cyanide-laden spillages and fish-kills, leading to a suspension of activity, during which there were low levels of local employment, ad hoc and unsustainable community development programmes, and little contribution via local, regional or national taxes because of the generous tax concessions of the Philippines government.

Before and during operations, neighbouring communities raised concerns about:

- its impact on fisheries, water and land stability
- decline in the saleability of fish through fear of contamination
- effects on health
- increased militarization
- a failure to obtain locals' free, prior and informed consent

Lafayette was unable to pay the banks, which sold the debt without environmental rehabilitation, compensation or assistance for fishermen towards alternative livelihoods. ANZ and two other banks in the consortium have signed on to the Equator Principles, a voluntary set of social and environmental standards, but the banks prioritized minimizing financial losses. Lafayette went into voluntary administration in December 2007 and was suspended from the Australian Stock Exchange in August 2008. Despite widespread local and regional opposition, the mine is said to be "ready to resume operations" under the new (non-Australian) owners.

Oxfam Australia has made a number of recommendations for the current mine owners, the Philippines regulatory authorities, the Australian mining industry, ANZ and other financiers of mining projects in developing countries, and for the Australian government.

The complete report will be available at the February meeting.

Oxfam Australia fundraiser: Cirque du Soleil's 'Dralion'.

See the new show Dralion®, and support Oxfam Australia at the same time. Cirque du Soleil has once again donated tickets, with proceeds from sales supporting

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our shared commitment to youth, particularly youth at risk. In 2006/2007 sales of tickets for Varekai raised more than \$200,000 to support Oxfam International Youth Partnerships (OIYP).

Thursday 28 May to Friday 12 June 2009

Ticket prices:

Child aged 2-12 years \$71 to adult \$125, depending on the performance.

Melbourne tickets are now on sale and can be purchased online or by calling 1800 034 034.

Contact: cirque@oxfam.org.au,
<http://www.oxfam.org.au/events/cirque/>

Victorian State Committee

Oxfam's State Committee met in January to plan several activities for this year, including some regional meetings with groups and a youth music event. The Committee plans to promote Oxfam's major campaign on **Climate Change**. They have released a DVD and booklet, **Sisters on the Planet**, to be officially launched on Monday 2nd March. The DVD may be something to show at an Oxfam-D.V. meeting.

Jenni Ambridge, Oxfam-D.V. member, and member of State Committee.

International Women's Day Focus on East Timor:

2009 marks ten years since East Timor's historic independence ballot. Join the East Timor Women's Association (ETWA) to celebrate the achievements of East Timorese women and their contributions to political freedom.

Fernanda Borges was born in East Timor and fled to Australia with her family in 1975 when the Indonesian military invaded.

Today, Fernanda is a leading East Timorese politician and the only female party leader in the national parliament. She will speak about the critical role played by women in the struggle for independence, justice and sustainable development.

'**Heru Ini Lafu: Weaving Life**', a documentary film, journeys into rural East Timor to show a side of life rarely seen on the Australian screen. It highlights women's resistance and celebrates their critical role in cultural regeneration and national development. Most importantly, the film reveals the beauty of East Timorese culture and the creative processes of traditional Tais weaving.

St Margaret's Church Hall, Pitt St Eltham, Wednesday 3rd March 7pm-10pm.

Entry: \$12 / \$10 (coffee, tea, cake included) to build (solar-powered) weaving centres for weaving cooperatives in regional centres. Sponsored by ETWA, *Elthambookshop*, Oxfam-D.V., Nillumbik Women's Network, and the MICA Justice Group.

OXFAM-DIAMOND VALLEY VENUE

8.00pm 3rd Friday of each month
Living and Learning Nilumbik
739 Main Rd Eltham, Melway Ref 21 J7

OFFICE BEARERS

Meeting Chairman - Stephen Lavender 9439 2063
Meeting Organizers - Carole Wigg 9439 7272
Marguerite Marshall,
John Kent, 9434 6882,
Joan Pickard

Treasurer & Membership - Alister Rowe 9435 5958
Publicity Officer & Webmaster - John Kent 9434 6882

Minutes Secretary - Elizabeth Stewart 9459 4429
Book Fair Coordinator - Beth Pender 9439 1716
Trade Winds Tea/Coffee - Val Byers