

VNV Matters

Vegetarian Network Victoria



Special points of interest:

- VNV Volunteer Seminar – 15th Sept 2007
- National Vegetarian Week 1st – 7th Oct 2007
- World Vegan Day – Sunday 28th Oct 2007.
- AGM 2007 Report.

Letter From The Editor



Welcome to the September 2007 Edition of *VNV Matters*, the official newsletter for Vegetarian Network Victoria. There are so many events and happenings in the coming months we'll inform you about, and

heaps of initiatives you can get involved with. And as ever, we aim to ensure you are connected with the vegetarian community and given the opportunity to have your say.

VNV Matters has a new look, so bear with us as we sort out the design kinks. We aim for the newsletter to be more interactive, with reader submissions, letters to the editor, active links and a general community feel. On the interactive note, we are pleased to introduce the brand new VNV forum www.vnv.org.au/forum, which is for anyone and everyone to discuss all manner of things related to VNV, vegetarian-

ism, and whatever else veggies and veggie interested people like to talk about. We will place relevant events, activities, projects, campaigns and news on the forum, bringing you another method of keeping up to date with anything of interest to the vegetarian world.

Here at VNV we have been busy little beavers, with many projects on the go one of them being our major event the World Vegan Day Festival (www.wvd.org.au) and our grant submission to the Voiceless Foundation for an environmental brochure. If you'd like to help out, see our new Get Active! section for ways of doing this.

On behalf of the VNV team, I wish you and your friends and family all the best for September, stay happy and healthy.

Meghan Street
Editor *VNV Matters*
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Annual General Meeting Report



Mark Doneddu
President - Vegetarian Network Victoria

On Saturday the 28th of July 2007 Vegetarian Network Victoria

held its sixth AGM. For the second year running it was held at Kindness House. The office bearers and committee members were elected for 2007-2008 and those elected positions were:
President: Mark Doneddu
Vice President: David Ogilvie
Treasurer: Pete Tenuta
Secretary: Meghan Street
Public Officer: Mark Doneddu

Committee Members: Bruce Poon, Jeff Hills, Pamela Messina, Will Schmidt.
Highlights of the year were reviewed in-

cluding the Incorporation of VNV, the securing of Peter Singer for the Sustainable Living Festival which provided much publicity and media coverage for VNV. The trivia night and stall appearances throughout the year have also resulted in VNV being in the best financial shape that it has been in for years.

The next twelve months should be even more challenging with the new website revamp, greater focus of memberships and grants, media attention through media releases and interviews, the 2007 Trivia Night, greater stall participation and volunteer seminars.

Feature Article



Reaching Out Will Schmidt

It is great to see vegetarianism being increasingly accepted in the general community over the years. Not only are people more

tolerant and informed about vegetarianism, but food suppliers, such as supermarkets and restaurants, are actually providing what we need. **But there's still a long way to go** – vegetarianism is still mired in negative myths caused by ignorance, conditioning, corporate advertising – as well as, ironically, certain vegetarians who let their anger cloud their judgement. Some people still think of vegetarianism as a dangerous, unhealthy cult for hippies and extremists.

Wouldn't it be great if we could get past all that nonsense, and really reach out with the truth! Lots of people are already trying, but not all succeed. If you want the general public to understand your position, first you have to understand theirs. You may find it difficult to empathise with people who regularly eat animals; but if you can, then **you'll really help the vegetarian cause.** After all, most of us were omnivores once!

So put yourself in the shoes of an average (meat-eating) person. You probably work full **time, and don't have time to moralise over** what you have for dinner. Every day you see advertisements in various forms, promoting meat as beneficial and necessary. You probably hear stories in the media about the **misdeeds of "extreme" vegetarians.** Perhaps you once knew a vegetarian who was not very **nice. Isn't it understandable that you may feel** hostile toward vegetarians in general?

That is why vegetarians are often simply regarded as hippies, religious cultists, animal rights activists, tree-huggers, or even just

melancholic martyrs with no sense of humour – all stereotypes cultivated by misinformation, biased samples, and fear of change. Some vegetarians do fit into these categories, but so do some omnivores. Being vegetarian does not define your personality, ethnic group, profession, religion or political beliefs; and above all, it does not make you superior or inferior to anyone else.

If you are a vegetarian, people will probably question you about your diet. This is a great chance to educate others, but you have to be **careful. Don't criticise or preach, and don't** make a huge issue out of it – you will only feed the negative stereotypes and turn people off. You are not aiming to make a spectacle of yourself or to self-righteously cleanse yourself of corruption; but to foster compassion for all life, and to raise consciousness and empathy. **But don't be passive or apologetic either,** because this will give the impression that you are not really serious about your vegetarianism. Aim to be assertive but humble when you

talk to people, and use **sentences like "I feel that..." or "This is my way of doing..."**

It is fantastic when you are questioned by genuinely interested or curious people. However, there are those who will question

defensively or aggressively; again, try to understand them. They may see their eating choices as a basic, undeniable right, and by your choice to abstain from meat (or any animal products), you may seem to be passively undermining them. Accordingly, they will go on the defensive, and try to agitate you with teasing or pro-meat arguments. This situation is hard to deal with, but try to stay reasonable and good-humoured. **Don't give them the** reaction they are looking for.

Some vegetarians are active in trying to keep the movement growing, while others prefer to practise quietly. If you want to get active, be positive in your approach. Emphasise the fact



“Being vegetarian does not define your personality, ethnic group, profession, religion or political beliefs; “

that being vegetarian is not about deprivation, but about making different choices. Help the person to break out of the mentality that meat has to be the centrepiece of a meal. Turn around negative statements about meat-eating into positive statements – e.g., **“If you cut down, you will be saving lives”** – and congratulate people on small achievements, such as introducing one vegetarian meal a week. This may seem tiny, but it is a positive step, and shows that the person is thinking and becoming aware.

A really powerful way to reach out is to introduce people to a range of vegetarian dishes, of both fresh food and cooked meals. Prove to **them that we don't eat grass!** Lentil dhal, adzuki bean stew, grilled eggplant with hummus, pumpkin and tofu pie and tempeh kebabs are just a sample of the delicious and varied cuisine for people to explore. When you talk to someone about vegetarianism, try to relate it to their own diet. The chances are that they already eat a vegetarian meal, like soup or salad, without realising! If they have a favourite meal that includes meat, show them how to make a vegetarian version of it.

But the best way you can possibly help vegetarianism is to be a living example of a happy, healthy, compassionate vegetarian. Live by what you stand for, and let compassion, not anger, be the basis of your attitudes toward other people and animals. To quote Gandhi, **“You must be the change you want to see in the world”**.



Your Say

Future editions of VNV Matters will feature a regular Your Say section for readers to write in about the newsletter or veg related issues. Letters must be no more than 50-100 words. Email letters to vnvmatters@vnv.org.au or post to GPO Box 2633 Melbourne VIC 3001 Australia

Win Vegan Books!

aduki independent press is giving VNV Matters readers the chance to win copies of two new books from the publishers of aduki magazine.

Veg*n Shopper is a pocket-sized guide to help you avoid animal-derived ingredients in food, alcohol and personal care products and retails for \$9.95.

Tempting Tempeh is a recipe book dedicated to the preparation of tempeh. It includes vegan recipes each accompanied by a full page colour photograph and retails for \$11.95. Both titles are available now from health food stores, organic grocers, vegan retailers, independent bookstores and online:

The first five people to visit the aduki website, find the competition code word and email the word with their contact details to competitions@aduki.net.au will get copies of each of the books.

www.aduki.net.au

Good luck!



Veggie Kids

This spot in the newsletter is especially dedicated to **veggie kids and their families**. We'd love to hear about any ideas you have for this section including **recipes for kids and their school lunch boxes, kid's activities and events, great children's books or movies with a veggie theme and anything else related to little veggies**. We'd also love to hear from any veggie kids, we'll even publish short messages from them.

Kid's competition!

The first five people to email vnv.matters@vnv.org.au with the subject title **'Buddie Budgie'** will win a copy of the lovely children's story of the same name. A story of a little budgie who has a roundabout adventure after he is taken from his family and put in a pet store

Easy Chocolate Custard

This tasty recipe is amazingly simple and has the added bonus of being very healthy. How many kids **will eat avocado? Well with this recipe, they'll probably eat heaps of it!** It's great to put into containers for a lunch treat.

Ingredients:

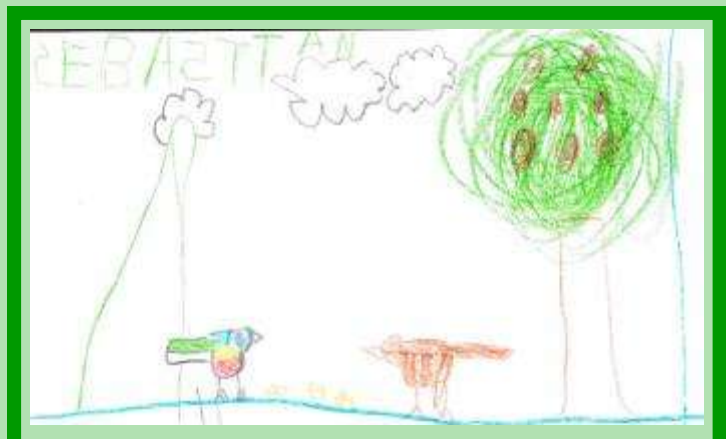
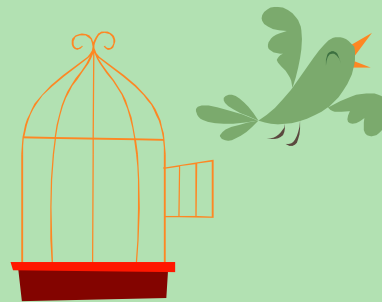
- 3 large bananas
- 1 avocado
- 3 soaked and pitted dates
- 2 teaspoons of cocoa powder

Method:

In a food processor blend the banana, avocado and soaked pitted dates into a smooth custard. Add the cocoa powder and fold into the mixture with a spoon **(so cocoa dust doesn't fly everywhere when you blend it in!)**. Blend the cocoa powder thoroughly into the custard. Taste and sweeten, or add extra cocoa powder if desired.

Eat as is or with chopped fruit such as banana, fresh or frozen berries, mango or use as a topping on ice cream or cakes.

Variations: Why not put a pinch of cinnamon in? Or try fresh coconut water or canned coconut cream. You could use carob instead of cocoa powder, or add a dash of lemon or lime juice for added zing!



Picture drawn by Sebastian—6 years old (life long vegetarian)



Restaurant Review

Crossways: Food for Life Will Schmidt

Offering a two-course lunch for just \$6.50 (\$5 concession), **The Hare Krishna “Crossways: Food for Life” restaurant** is one of the best value vegetarian eats around. Open 11:30 to 2:30 on Monday to Saturday, Crossways has a relaxed, informal dining area where simple, wholesome meals are served by volunteers.

While Crossways is not wholly vegan, it is very vegan-friendly. Each weekday a different dish is offered; main courses include hearty servings of chickpea subji, satay veggies, Malaysian or Thai curry, or sambar with brown or jasmine rice. If you have room, fruit flavoured semolina halava with custard (or without on request) is offered for dessert. The weekly menu can be found on their website www.iskcon.net.au/food/crossways.

Crossways also has a lounge area upstairs for relaxing and/or perusing the collection of Indian spiritual literature available. If you are that way inclined, evening yoga classes and spiritual discussions are also offered over vegetarian dinners.

Crossways is located at 123 Swanston St in the city, and is accessible by a narrow staircase leading up from the street. Ph. 9663 8208



Recipe

Vegan Stuffed Potatoes Will Schmidt

Ingredients:

3 to 5 big potatoes
olive oil
1 clove garlic
1 large carrot
1 little celery
1 roma tomato
half an avocado
pepper



Wash, dry and stab the potatoes. Wrap them in foil and bake for about 75 minutes at 190°C.

Grate the garlic and then the carrot and celery (garlic first so that all the remains come off the grater with the other veggies). Dice the tomato.

Heat a bit of oil in a small saucepan. Sauté the garlic then add the carrot, celery and tomato.

Leaving the oven on, take out the potatoes, and carefully scoop out most of the flesh of each one, leaving a secure case.

Mash the half avocado with the potato flesh, add the cooked veggies and sprinkle in some pepper. Mix thoroughly.

Carefully spoon this mixture into the potato cases. Drizzle the tops with olive oil and return them to the oven. Bake 10 minutes and serve.

Get Active!

Get Active! is dedicated to spreading the veggie word and letting you know how you can become involved in projects, campaigns, events, letters or anything else that helps to raise the profile of a healthy vegetarian lifestyle. The next couple of months are jam packed with things you can get involved in. See below for all our upcoming projects

November VNV Information Seminar – Saturday 17th of November

Are you interested in becoming a volunteer for Vegetarian Network Victoria? Would you like to know more about who we are and what we do? Why not come along to a VNV information seminar! The next information seminar will be held on Saturday the 17th of November from 4 – 5.30pm at Kindness House. Light refreshment will be provided. Please see details below to RSVP or to find out more.

Date: Saturday 17th November

Time: 4pm – 5.30pm

Venue: Kindness House, Level 1 Suite 6, 288 Brunswick St Fitzroy

Contact: Mark Doneddu 044 871 2063 or mark.doneddu@vnv.org.au

RSVP: 16th of November

National Vegetarian Week (1st – 7th of October)

www.vegetarianweek.com.au

VNV, in conjunction with vegetarian societies and groups throughout Australia, will be promoting National Vegetarian Week in October. We will be issuing press releases, holding stalls throughout Melbourne and conducting other events to **show the many benefits of a meat free way of life. We'd love to have your support in our efforts, make sure you tell your friends and family about National Veg Week. Perhaps you could hold your own gathering, have a vegetarian dinner party for your family, make your work or school mates some delicious veg fare or hand out some of our helpful info sheets (www.vnv.org.au/InfoSheets.htm). Every little action counts. Let's see if we can make this week a well known national week of awareness every year!**

Trivia night - Working group needed

Last year we held a fundraising trivia night in Camberwell. The place was packed, the competition hot and the night an entertaining one for all.

We have had a number of enquiries through our info email asking whether we will have another one this year, and we'd like to have one as it's a great opportunity to meet people, a fun night out and a much needed means of raising some funds for VNV.

We are looking for a group of people to take on the responsibility of organising this year's trivia night. Organisation of the event includes booking the hall, contacting businesses for prizes, sourcing trivia questions and microphone presenters, advertising through posters and announcements and coordinating table bookings and catering.

Let us know if you'd like to be part of the Trivia Night working group by contacting trivia.night@vnv.org.au. We are thinking of an event date sometime in November (giving us enough time for organisation), possibly Saturday the 17th or the 24th.



World Vegan Day! 28th October

www.wvd.org.au



World Vegan Day is a major event on the VNV events calendar; see the website above to find out more about this great festival. We are looking for volunteers willing to assist with this major festival by promoting the event, organising poster and flyer distribution, contacting businesses and assistance on the day of the event (28th of October). If you would like to help out in any way, please contact Bek on 041 238 9629. Volunteering for this event is a rewarding experience and gives people the opportunity to meet likeminded others.

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Media Response email list

media.writers@vnn.org.au

VNV has established a media response network as part of our media campaign. The network comprises letter writers and media scanners, and has been established with the aim of increasing the profile of positive vegetarian issues in the mainstream media and helping to dispel the negative myths and concerns of those not familiar with a meat free way of life. If you would like to become involved with the media **writer's network, either as a media scanner who alerts us to topical issues, or as a letter writer to newspapers, magazines and online publications, send an email to [me-
dia.writers@vnn.org.au](mailto:media.writers@vnn.org.au).**

Book Review

Wendy-Jane Sheppard

The Emotional Lives of Animals

A leading Scientist explores animal joy, sorrow and empathy and why they matter.

Author: Marc Bekoff

Forward by Jane Goodall

Publisher: New World Library

ISBN: 9781577315025

The book **'The Emotional Lives of Animals'** is a must read for all who promote and advocate compassion for all living beings. This book is also compulsory reading for a large majority of the population who do not consider the impact of their daily lives and eating habits on the billions of animals. These animals suffer endless pain, boredom, and isolation from others of their kind. They experience a sense of hopelessness, despair, and ultimately a premature and excruciating death for the sole benefit of humankind. Animals that from birth to death have been imprisoned in factory farms, experimental laboratories, zoos and other organisations and institutions that exploit large numbers of our fellow living beings sharing the planet with us.

Marc Bekoff, a Professor Emeritus of Biology at the University of Colorado and co-founder with Jane Goodall of Ethologists for the Ethical Treatment of Animals has brought together a growing body of scientific evidence, il-

lustrated with his own careful observations, that supports the existence of a variety of emotions in other animals.

Contents of the book include a brilliantly written forward by Jane Goodall where she concludes by highlighting that this book will add a strong voice to the growing chorus of those trying to change attitudes towards other animals. This book is invaluable for those **struggling to improve animal's** environments where, so often, there is an almost total lack of understanding of their emotional lives, their experience of life and their relationships with others.

For further research Bekoff has included a substantial and valuable bibliography and his end notes and index are a useful addition.

'The Emotional Lives of Animals' is a well presented and laid out book that is easy to understand and relate to the information contained within its pages. An excel-

lent book, highly recommended and essential reading and reference for all human animals as it gives us a better insight and understanding of the emotional lives of all the other animals.





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Who we are

Vegetarian Network Victoria Inc. (VNV), founded in 1998, is a community-based, not-for-profit organisation in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. It is run by people who care about human health, animal welfare and the environment. Our aim is to promote the many benefits of vegetarianism, and provide quality service, support and up-to-date information to vegetarians, vegans and the general community.

Vegetarianism is more than just tofu, sandals and herbal tea!

We are on the web
www.vnv.org.au

From the Web

Youtube Videos

Feeding the hungry the vegetarian way

youtube.com/watch?v=HPjWaP6e064

Chicken (Tofu) Style Strips – Vegan

youtube.com/watch?v=FjH9lgvZRco

Celebrity Veg

Celebrity vegetarian and eco warrior Daryl Hannah has a wonderful video blog featuring veg food, environmentally friendly products, animal issues, people projects and lots of other great themes.

Check it out www.dhlovelife.com/v2/show/archive/index1.html

Social Veg

Would you like to socialise with like minded people? See below for links to social and events pages of VNV and other organisations.

Vegetarian Network Victoria Social Events

www.vnv.org.au/SocialEvents.htm

Vegans Unite! Social Events

www.vegansunite.org.au/melbourne/

World Vegan Day Festival Melbourne 28th October

www.wvd.org.au/html/2007

World Animal Day Benefit Concert Saturday, 6 October

Email: ngame@dodo.com.au

Website: www.worldanimalday.org.uk

