

## 2014 International Women's Day (IWD) events in Sydney, Australia

### Friday 7 March 12-1pm

The Brahma Kumaris (BK) centre at Ashfield provided an art workshop to neighbouring Burwood Council's IWD event. The day also included speakers, information stalls, theatre, dance, lunch and giveaways. Twenty participants in the art workshop shared stories in pairs about women who have inspired them through positive qualities, then depicted those qualities through art. At the end they shared their stories and art as a whole group. Most people said their main inspiration came from their mother. An event organiser from the Council said she received good feedback from participants.



### Saturday 8 March

At Ashfield BK centre, in a program from 2-4pm on 'Inspiring Change', Feng Shui Master BK Gayle Shakti Atherton shared a personal story of how four women helped to save her life during a serious illness, then she gave a talk on Inner Feng Shui. The international gathering of participants including 14 women and 2 men from Australia, China, Japan, South America, Sri Lanka, India and Fiji then chose an aspect of their lives that was particularly important to them and used that as a focus for decorating a crown. Many chose 'inner purpose' as their theme. Others chose things like 'the world family' or 'helping others'. At the end they shared the symbolic meaning of their crowns and enjoyed afternoon tea in a happy and light atmosphere.



At East Sydney, Srs Conny and Casey held a program from 6-7pm on 'Honouring Me, Honouring You / Inspiring Change'. It was an evening celebrating the role of women in bringing about change to create a world of higher values with integrity, respect and appreciation, non-violence and universal harmony. There was a special guided meditation and a screening of an excerpt from 'Girl Rising', a moving and inspiring documentary about the stories of girls around the world (viewable on YouTube), followed by discussion.

### **Sunday 9 March**

Twelve Tamil BK sisters enthusiastically created a program to celebrate IWD for the first time at Toongabbie. The program included sharing of personal stories, inspirations about being a woman and stories of the power of women in history and BK life. There were special songs and videos about significant women who are spiritual leaders in the BK's organisation. Srs Saratha and Kamala briefly shared the essence of the Four Faces of Woman program.

"It was great to see most mothers contributed with courage. They did very well and everyone enjoyed it," reported Br Keethan, coordinator of the Toongabbie Class Location.



### **Wednesday 12 March, 6.30-8.00pm**

At the Blue Mountains retreat centre, the evening commenced with a half hour of peaceful meditation as the sun was setting, which was visible through the beautiful pyramid shaped windows of the Meditation Hall.

After this there was a panel of three women who have dedicated their lives to inspiring change in themselves and others. They were Natalie Hull, a local community worker, Kay Ridgway, a renowned naturopath in the Blue Mountains and BK Nerida. The panellists were asked three questions:

1. Do you remember the first time you had the thought to empower women? Can you tell us about this?
2. The theme of this year's International Women's Day is Inspiring Change. Could you describe how you inspire change in women in your day to day life?
3. How are you empowered yourself? Who or what inspires you to change?

Each answered in their own way from personal experience and the 20 people in the audience felt inspired by their commitment and honesty.

The retreat centre coordinator Sr Sally said, "Several women attended who have not been to the Centre for a long time and it was a joy to see them again". The evening finished with a song and powerful meditation. Everyone was given sweets and affirmation cards on leaving.