

a special National Science Week event

CANBERRA CONVERSATION

Sunday 23 August 2009, 2.30 - 6pm
CSIRO Discovery Centre

a chorus
of women

Science and the Creative Arts – A POTENT COLLABORATION FOR CHANGE?

*'There are songs in the science in search of singers
We can change the climate if we make that music'*

- from our new song, written by Glenda Cloughley for National Science Week 2009

QUESTIONS FOR THIS NATIONAL SCIENCE WEEK CONVERSATION

- What can the creative arts contribute to public discourse on global environmental change?
- Why is it particularly important to bring scientists and artists together in working collaborations, rather than have them work in isolation from one another?

WHO WILL BE THERE?

Prominent local scientists and artists will be invited to join Chorus members and composers Judith Clingan AM and Dr Glenda Cloughley, and scientist Dr Nicky Grigg to provide insights based on their experiences of how creative arts and science can intertwine.

A Chorus of Women will provide live artistic contributions, including original music written and directed by Chorus members Glenda Cloughley, Judith Clingan and Johanna McBride. The event will be facilitated by Chorus member Dr Janet Salisbury (Director of Biotext, a science information consultancy based in Canberra). Will you come? RSVP by 20 August to hoffie@iinet.net.au

ABOUT CANBERRA CONVERSATIONS

Canberra Conversations are a series of citizen conversations on topics of importance for our future. They include information sharing, small group and facilitated larger group discussions together with A Chorus of Women's artistic representation of the social and ethical challenges that these subjects present to our community. The aim is to see how community engagement and wise decision making could be helped by a more open dialogue among citizens, scientists, artists, business people and policy makers.

HOW DO CANBERRA CONVERSATIONS DIFFER FROM OTHER PUBLIC MEETINGS?

Most public discussion is based on debate, which is inherently adversarial. In Canberra Conversations we take a different approach which Dr Janet Salisbury has developed in line with A Chorus of Women's mission and practice from the kind of dialogue proposed by physicist David Bohm in his book *On Dialogue* (1996).

In a discussion (or debate) people usually hold fixed positions and try to convince others to change. At best this may produce agreement or compromise, but it rarely gives rise to creative solutions. If issues of fundamental importance are involved, positions tend to become more entrenched and the discussion may either become confrontational or turn into a polite avoidance of the issues. In this process, benefits tend to be exaggerated, and risks and uncertainties downplayed.

In a dialogue, participants listen to each other with sufficient interest and empathy to understand the meaning and motivations of other positions properly. Importantly, they bring an openness to changing or modifying their initial position as a result of the process. In this type of discussion, uncertainties and fears can be realistically acknowledged, while benefits and risks can be examined honestly. This allows the proper analysis of evidence that is needed to allow creative thinking and wise actions.

'...it is proposed that a form of free dialogue may well be one of the most effective ways of investigating the crisis which faces society, and indeed the whole of human nature and consciousness today. Moreover, it may turn out that such a form of free exchange of ideas and information is of fundamental relevance for transforming culture and freeing it of destructive misinformation, so that creativity can be liberated.'

- David Bohm and F. David Peat, 'Dialogue and culture', *Science, Order, and Creativity*, Bantam, New York, 1987.

OTHER CANBERRA CONVERSATIONS

Check www.chorusofwomen.org for details of the next Canberra Conversation. Two conversations have been held this year in collaboration with the ANU Climate Change Institute at the ACT Legislative Assembly, Civic Square:

- CANBERRA'S ENERGY FUTURE: THINKING TOGETHER ABOUT WAYS FORWARD – February 2009
- EMISSIONS TRADING: THE WAY FORWARD TO GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION? – May 2009

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RSVP FOR THIS FREE EVENT

TIME Sunday 23 August, 2.30 – 6pm (afternoon tea will be provided)
PLACE Optus Theatre, CSIRO Discovery Centre, Clunies Ross Street (near ANU campus)
RSVP to Sue Hoffmann by Thursday 20 August EMAIL hoffie@inet.net.au
CONTACT Nicky Grigg for further information, phone 6246 5569 or email nicky.grigg@csiro.au or see the Chorus website, www.chorusofwomen.org

a chorus of women

