



Rosie Batty is an Australian domestic violence campaigner and the 2015 Australian of the Year



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### WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to this issue of IWIN newsletter.

The year 2015 has come with a range of new challenges for IWIN. One of these is to identify the issues faced by women in our local ACT community. We are shocked to find domestic violence as one of the most prevalent concerns, in addition to the gender and disability issues. As per the media report, in the first half of 2015, on average two women were killed every week in Australia due to domestic violence. In ACT itself, two women, both 28 years old mother with three children, were brutally killed this year. And so many cases do not even get reported.

We believe that, IWIN has social responsibilities towards the ongoing domestic violence issues, being an organization working for women empowerment. Accordingly, IWIN is keen to take up a positive initiative to prevent crimes against women and children. That is why the IWIN Committee has decided to look into the incidence of domestic violence in ACT against women from the South Asian ancestry. You may ask, why only women from the South Asian community, is not it an issue for women from all communities? My response to this question would be that these women face a very different kind of domestic violence, which needs to be recognised correctly. In most instances, these women themselves are neither aware of their rights to move away from this abusive situation nor they

have adequate information to seek redress. And evidence shows that, where they have sought help, police and judicial processes have not been able to respond appropriately. It is because South Asian women experience complex levels of violence perpetrated against them, often obscured by cultural norms about gender relations and notions of community / family honour. But most importantly, violence against these women has gone unnoticed in Australia largely due to the social stigma attached with admitting such crimes committed by family members. So, there is a dire need to bring these domestic violence issues specific to the South Asian women into public notice. These women need to be made aware of their rights under the Australian Laws, unacceptable behaviours and the support system available to them.

IWIN has initiated the ball rolling in this direction by developing a collaborative project with academics from universities (ANU, Canberra and Monash), legal and medical practitioners, policy makers and activists. Currently the project is in the fund-securing stage and we expect to start the project very soon. We request all readers to support this initiative actively - please participate and contribute to this project, whatever way you can. If not clear about how to get involved with this project, please contact us, we are always happy to come up with some options for you. We also intend to hold a range of

awareness workshops related to this project. Please keep an eye on your emails for IWIN event information.

IWIN celebrated International Women's Day 2015 on the 21<sup>st</sup> May this year by organising a panel discussion on domestic violence issues. The success of the event made us realize that we are fortunate to live in a community where people are interested in curbing the ongoing social ills and keen to participate in doing so. A big thank you to all panel speakers of the day and all who attended the event and participated in the lively discussion. We look forward to getting such strong community support for our future IWIN events.

As you know, IWIN's website ([www.iwinact.org](http://www.iwinact.org)) is designed to be IWIN's face for the community. So, I encourage you all to visit the website and send us your feedback. We will be happy to take your suggestions on board. Please contact us if you have any concerns or just want to get involved or simply wish to DONATE to help our partner NGOs providing free education to socially disadvantaged children. Also, do share your experience and exciting pictures with our readers in future issues of IWIN newsletter and send these to: [contact@iwinact.org](mailto:contact@iwinact.org) OR [h\\_madhumita@hotmail.com](mailto:h_madhumita@hotmail.com)

Hope you enjoy reading this issue.

*Madhumita*

## 2015 ACTIVITIES

IWiN decided to raise awareness on the issue of domestic violence as a result of the recent events in Canberra.

So, IWiN celebrated International Women's Day 2015 on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March with a panel discussion on Domestic Violence, followed by a networking session.

The event received strong positive feedback indicating that we need to have more initiatives like this in future.



Networking after event also continued the discussions

The panel discussion had representation from academia and legislation and covered issues related to isolation, gender, perception. It also included a representation of identity and strength via dance. Finally it included an opportunity to allow for further discussions over tea



*Panel deliberating over issues*



*Domestic violence in the community is a collective problem that needs a collective solution*



The panel discussion deliberated over a range of issues including cultural, social, psychological and legal aspects of domestic violence.



*Cultural presentation during the panel discussion on domestic violence*



PANEL DISCUSSION ON  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



Panel discussion, speaker and Chair of IWIN, Mrs Madhumita Iyengar

Our speakers for the event were Mr. Steve Doszpot, Prof Patricia Easteal, Prof Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt, Dr Swati Parashar along with the Chair of IWIN Mrs Madhumita Iyengar and the MC for the event Ms Shubhra Aurita Roy

Mr Doszpot is a member of the Australian Capital Territory Legislative Assembly representing the electorate of Molonglo for the Liberal Party since 2012. He is also the Chair of the ACT Assembly Standing Committee on Health, Community and Social Services

Prof Patricia Easteal, PhD AM is an academic, author, activist and advocate, best known for her research, publications and teaching in the area of women and the law. In 2010 she was made a Member of the Order of Australia 'For service to the community, education and the law through promoting awareness and understanding of violence against women, discrimination and access to justice for minority groups.

Dr Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt is a Senior Fellow in the Resource, Environment and Development group (RE&D) at ANU. She is a subject matter expert in the area of gender issues particularly in context of mining communities.

Dr. Swati Parashar, School of Political and Social Inquiry, Faculty of Arts, Monash University. Swati's research is focused on the nature of political violence and wars in South Asia,

particularly women as perpetrators and survivors of violence.

Mr Surendra Dutta, the Deputy High Commissioner of the Indian High Commission attended the event and participated in the panel discussion with his spouse, Mrs Sunita Dutta.



Panel speakers deliberating

Panel, Left to right – Mr Surendra Dutta Indian High Commission, Prof Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt Australian National University, Mr Steve Doszpot ACT Legislative Assembly, Dr Swati Parashar, Monash University

Panel discussion on domestic violence



Panel speaker Prof. Patricia Easteal



Dr Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt speaking



An engaged and interested audience



Dr Swati Parashar speaking



Panel speakers and participants



Panel speaker Mr Steve Doszpot, ACT MLA

## OUR NGO RELATIONSHIPS



Children learning in classroom in Ek Prayas

### EK Prayas, Kolkata, India

Ek Prayas school continues to be one of our the IWIn partner in India, houses about 200 children from slums, aged 4-14yrs. The School provides both academic and vocational training in English medium through a systematic curriculum, appropriate to students' specific needs. Breakfast and lunch are provided to the children in school daily, in addition to their school uniforms, textbooks and stationaries - mostly sponsored by generous donors. IWIn is supporting this school in setting up of a Computer Training Centre for the students, starting in the 2014-15 academic year.

Sponsors can choose an option as below:

- + Educate a child for one year (@ approx. Aus\$ 135 per child) (Inclusive of utility pack)
- + Gift utility pack to children for one year (@ approx. Aus\$ 30 per child)
- + Sponsor a meal for all 200 children (@ approx. Aus\$ 50 (Breakfast+ Lunch)
- + Sponsor a breakfast for all 200 children (@ approx. Aus\$ 15)
- + Sponsor a lunch for all 200 children (@ approx. Aus\$ 25)

*Make a difference today!*

### Pazhassi Raja Tribal School, Kerala, India

**Pazhassi Raja Tribal School** is located at Wayanad in the southern Indian state of Kerala. It is a residential school for tribal children who are among the most neglected community - providing food, accommodation, and medical needs as well as a full education, completely free of cost to the students.



Children learning archery outdoors at the Pazhassi Raja Tribal School

Wayanad has the highest population of tribal people in Kerala. The tribal people have had no access to education any time in their lives. Today tribal people are exploited as the work force for cash crop estate works like coffee and vanilla, and other illegal activities. Dr. Appanu Nambiar, a retired professor of education, founded this school in 1997 with an objective of providing a safe environment to educate the tribal children to adapt to modern day challenges and still retain their age-old cultural customs. The school that started with 41 students has more than 250 students now.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

[http://voiceofachild.org/projects/tribal\\_school/](http://voiceofachild.org/projects/tribal_school/)

The school is following the 'Gurukula' system of education where teachers and students live together as in a family. Agriculture, stitching and tailoring, carpentry work, basket making, book binding, yoga and music are part of the school syllabus. Paddy, pulses, bananas and vegetables are cultivated by

students and teachers. Significant change has come in the attitudes of the tribal community towards education and health care. Senior students participate in rural development activities of the area.

Both boys and girls are also taught traditional martial arts for self-defense and psychological self-development. As a practical idealist, Dr. Nambiar knows the day-to-day side of life these children will face in the real world and feels teaching self-defense skills as important as the standard curriculum. The school started with 40 boys and just one girl. Today, out of 250 students, 129 of them are girls, while boys number at 121.

Another significant change that happened is about the caste system mindset which exists among the tribal people. During the initial days of the school, the divisions based on the caste were very evident among students. Students of the 'so called' upper caste did not interact or eat with the rest of the students, reflecting their family customs. Significant progress has been made in this aspect.

Sponsorship packages include:

- + Educate a child for one year (@ approx. Aus\$ 135 per child) (Inclusive of utility pack)
- + Gift utility pack to children for one year (@ approx. Aus\$ 30 per child)
- + Sponsor a meal for all 200 children (@ approx. Aus\$ 50 (Breakfast+ Lunch)
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2015 PLANS

QUICK FACTS ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



### Keep your calendars free

Our events are designed to be fun, educative and yet an opportunity for us to come together as a community to make a difference.

If you have any other ideas for events, or would like to host one yourself, contact us at the earliest.

- ✦ National Pink Day Event
- ✦ An Annual IWIn Fundraiser event
- ✦ FREE educative seminar/Workshop/ Presentation sessions for the ACT community on identified current gender issues.



**Together we can  
make a difference**



### United Nations Women & The Beijing Platform for Action

According to a 2013 global review of available data, 35 per cent of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence. However, some national violence studies show that up to 70 per cent of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime from an intimate partner.

It is estimated that of all women killed in 2012, almost half were killed by intimate partners or family members.

More often than not, cases of violence against women go unreported. For instance, a study based on interviews with 42,000 women across the 28 Member States of the European Union revealed that only 14 per cent of women reported their most serious incident of intimate partner violence to the police, and 13 per cent reported their most serious incident of non-partner violence to the police.

Worldwide, more than 700 million women alive today were married as children (below 18 years of age). More than one in three—or some 250 million—were married before 15. Child brides are often unable to effectively negotiate safer sex, leaving themselves vulnerable to sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, along with early pregnancy. The fact that girls are not physically mature enough to give birth, places both mothers and their babies at

risk. Poor girls are also 2.5 times more likely to marry in childhood than those living in the wealthiest quintile.

Among ever-married girls, current and/or former intimate partners are the most commonly reported perpetrators of physical violence in all the countries with available data.

Around 120 million girls worldwide (slightly more than 1 in 10) have experienced forced intercourse or other forced sexual acts at some point in their lives.

More than 133 million girls and women have experienced some form of female genital mutilation (FGM) in the 29 countries in Africa and the Middle East where the harmful practice is most common. Beyond extreme physical and psychological pain, girls who undergo FGM are at risk of prolonged bleeding, infection (including HIV), infertility, complications during pregnancy and death.

Trafficking ensnares millions of women and girls in modern-day slavery. Women and girls represent 55 per cent of the estimated 20.9 million victims of forced labour worldwide, and 98 per cent of the estimated 4.5 million forced into sexual exploitation.

### RE INFORMATION

[www.anrows.org.au/sites/default/files/Violence-Against-Australian-Women-Key-Statistics.pdf](http://www.anrows.org.au/sites/default/files/Violence-Against-Australian-Women-Key-Statistics.pdf)

[beijing20.unwomen.org/en/infographic/evaw](http://beijing20.unwomen.org/en/infographic/evaw)

[www.domesticviolence.com.au/pages/domestic-violence-statistics.php](http://www.domesticviolence.com.au/pages/domestic-violence-statistics.php)



### For Your Information

Important statistics on domestic violence against women : Sourced from Australian National Research Organisation For Women Safety (ANROWS)



**Violence against women:  
key statistics**

Research from the 2012 ABS Personal Safety Survey and Australian Institute of Criminology shows that both men and women in Australia experience substantial levels of violence.

Domestic and sexual violence is overwhelmingly committed by men against women.

89 women were killed by their current or former partner between 2008-10. **This equates to nearly one woman every week.**

## Violence against women: key statistics

### RATES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & MEN

SINCE THE AGE OF 15:

Category	Rate	Description
Sexual violence	1 in 5	Australian women had experienced sexual violence
Sexual violence	1 in 22	Australian men had experienced sexual violence
Physical or sexual violence from a current or former partner	1 in 6	Australian women had experienced physical or sexual violence from a current or former partner
Physical or sexual violence from a current or former partner	1 in 19	Australian men had experienced physical or sexual violence from a current or former partner
Emotional abuse by a current or former partner	1 in 4	Australian women had experienced emotional abuse by a current or former partner
Emotional abuse by a current or former partner	1 in 7	Australian men had experienced emotional abuse by a current or former partner
Physical violence	1 in 3	Australian women had experienced physical violence
Physical violence	1 in 2	Australian men had experienced physical violence

## Violence against women: key statistics

### WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE



It is most common for women to experience violence from a *male ex-partner*.  
Of women who had experienced violence from an ex-partner:



**61%** had children in their care when the violence occurred.

**+1**

**73%** had experienced more than one incident of violence.



**58%** had never contacted the police.



**28%** had never sought advice or support.

Source: ANROWS Clips from <https://www.pinterest.com/WomensInfoSA/womens-safety/>; as accessed on 11/06/2015

The Australian National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) is an independent, not-for-profit company established as an initiative under Australia's National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022 (the National Plan). It is jointly funded by the Commonwealth and all state and territory governments of Australia. ANROWS have developed a number of infographics summarising key statistics on women's experiences of domestic and family violence and sexual assault. For more info, please go to [www.anrows.org.au](http://www.anrows.org.au)



The Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA) was established in March 2010 as one of six National Women's Alliances funded by the Australian Government. AWAVA's focus is addressing all forms violence against women, to 'ensure that all women and children are able to live free from all forms of violence and abuse'. Check them out in: [www.awava.org.au](http://www.awava.org.au)

## Movie review by Manaswini Iyengar

### **Title: Provoked**

Release Year: 2006

Director: Jag Mundhra

Starring: Aishwarya Rai (Kiranjit),

Naveen Andrews (Deepak),

Miranda Richardson (Ronnie),

Nandita Das (Radha)

Genre: Real Life Story

**Rating: 4 / 5**

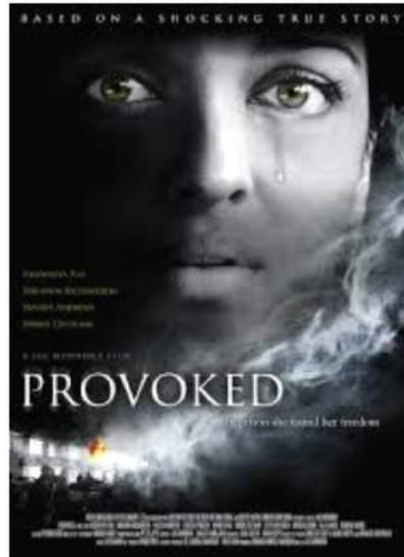
*This movie is the kind that seems to be presenting one story, only to present a completely different one. Or to be specific, like most movies it seems to present the male perspective only to be refreshingly risqué and tell the story of a woman abused rather than the tale of the man killed (he had it coming all along if you ask me).*

*It's been a while since I've watched this movie so excuse me if the events are not in chronological order. That said, the fact that this movie is still in my head after at least 1 year of not watching it (outside of some clips perhaps) and I can recall most of it shows how powerful it is. I guess you could say that it really lives up to its name by provoking the thoughts of all its viewers.*

*The fact that it is based upon a real case is all the more reason to watch the movie – because these cases don't always receive this kind of media coverage nor are they reported, but they happen all the time. You know the adage, if a tree falls but no one is there to hear it, does it fall at all?*

*You could apply the adage to multiple cases of domestic violence that go unreported – if a woman gets beaten by her husband but uses concealer on her*

*bruises, does she still get hit? The resounding answer in both these cases is obviously 'yes' and while that may not be the concern of this movie, I thought it would be a good question to raise as we strive to raise our awareness about domestic violence.*



*Kiranjit Ahluwalia is sentenced for murdering her husband by setting him on fire. The scene is brutal and afterwards we see her outside, almost paralysed with shock. She can't be with her children anymore and we wonder why she'd killed her husband so brutally. But then we see that she was emotionally, physically and sexually abused by her husband for almost 10 years. It's a shocking revelation and it only becomes worse as they show repeated flashbacks. The sad thing is that she cannot protest her innocence since she is an immigrant from India to London with no clear knowledge of either English or the legal system.*

*That's where we see how important it is to be given support and how necessary it becomes to show survivors of domestic violence that they are not alone in their struggles. The scene that I still remember*

*so clearly is the one where Deepak (her husband) threatens to burn her face off with the iron when she fails to comply with his demands. It's harrowing to know that in certain households, women are in constant fear of fatal damage to themselves or those they hold dear with no way of escaping. What's even worse is that these same women are eventually so broken that they resort to desperate measures – usually suicide but in the case of Kiran, homicide because she was that desperate to end her suffering at the hands of her husband.*

*That's another thing we have to take into account – the values we inscribe in women in India. We tell them that men can display their affection through acts of violence. If he pulls your hair, he likes you. In literature we often hear about the women loving how rough a man is with her or the acceptance of violence as 'manly'. Why? Why do Indian women think that violence is an acceptable way in which a man can express his emotions? And doesn't it just predispose girls to being in abusive relationships because they convince them-selves its love or caring and somehow they'll be less regarded in the society if they value themselves more and leave the abusive relationship over staying? No wonder that most Indian women prefer to let their identity and self-esteem be destroyed for the sake of so called 'family honour'.*

*I strongly feel that this is a 'must see' movie for all women, particularly those coming from the South Asian community, to know what is acceptable behaviour in a relationship and what is not – it is absolutely necessary for them to know that self-respect and dignity are more important than the empty 'family honour' that shields domestic violence.*



## Book review by Manaswini Iyengar

### **Title: Purple Hibiscus**

Author: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichies

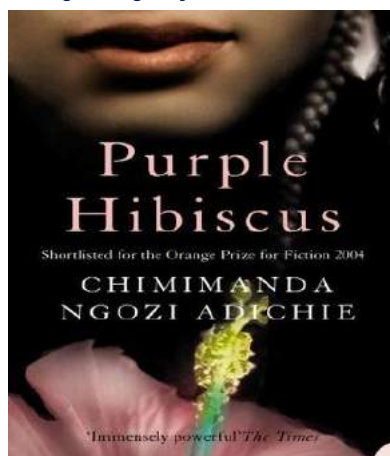
Genre: Surviving Domestic Violence

Rating: 4.5 / 5

*Purple Hibiscus is a book that focuses on one family's narrative – it is not one of those stories that intertwine multiple lives to give us variety. It is a story that takes one family and focuses on that one family to give us depth. And overall it strikes me as a story of hope in the face of adversity. It is a story about learning to speak up and give voice to your opinions. It is about family and the effects of abuse on people.*

*I think that the one thing Purple Hibiscus does particularly well is showing how it can be exceptionally difficult to talk about the abuse you experience and how it can hurt to discuss it – especially if your abuser is very close to you. Furthermore, this story shows how different people can have different reactions to the same environment. I found it interesting that the protagonist Kambili's brother Jaja could speak up and felt more confident in speaking up. Lying within that may be the fact Jaja is a boy with more power than either his sister or his mother or it may just be his own protective and brash nature that makes him react to his father's abuse in a more confrontational way. Purple Hibiscus also showcases how weak women are in the society. Kambili's mother is unable to leave the marriage – despite being beaten and bruised (she has approximately six miscarriages due to having her husband beat her in the stomach with a bible). For one she is a woman with no power who has children. Leaving the marriage would involve giving up her children and we see a woman who is willing to take anything to protect her children. Eventually Kambili's father is dealt with in a way that shows Kambili's mother finally being proactive. It may be a big decision with far-reaching*

*consequences but the book ends on a hopeful note – with Kambili's mother taking her agency back.*



*Of course this is mostly Kambili's story – in particular her awakening as a young adult. Kambili is a quiet girl and it's important to note that one of the first things she tells us about is how she shares tea with her father. She tells us that it burns her tongue but she doesn't care because in that moment she feels connected to and loved by her father. And this one sentence characterises Kambili's dynamics with her father [Eugene].*

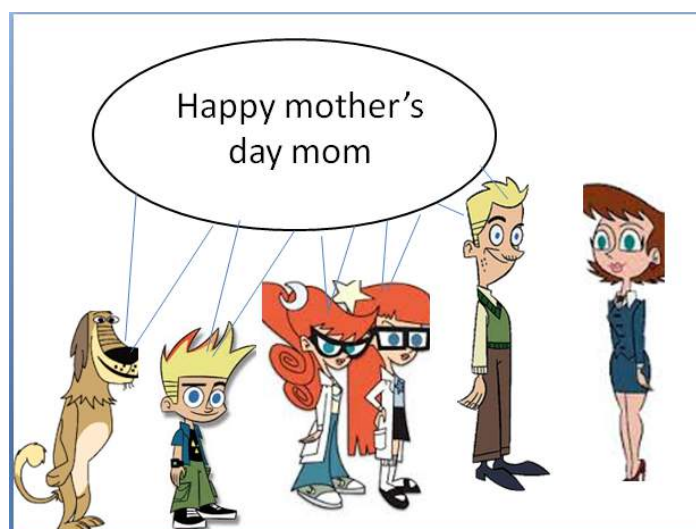
*Even when her father hurts her, she keeps quiet. Because she either believes that she deserves it or it is his way of showing love. Her mother says nothing as she feels powerless and her brother is the one who first stands up to Eugene. Jaja is the one who sets all the events of the novel into motion by refusing to attend Church. We could argue that Jaja is the one who really pushes the plot forward but that would be a disservice to Kambili. Because this is not a story about fighting your abuser. It is a tale about coming to terms with the fact that you are being abused.*

*Kambili has lost her voice and sense of self-esteem living with her father in their oppressive life. We really can see just how damaged she is when she goes to live with her Aunt. Or, when she meets her grandfather. She's unaccustomed to hearing people talk at the dinner table, doesn't understand her cousin's taste in music and feels the need to hate her Grandfather simply because her father does. Kambili takes her father's teachings*

*as gospel and is scared of going against them. In this way we see that Kambili's abuse is mostly emotional. She has learned from her brother's mistakes - Jaja has a mutilated finger after he got bad grades in school which is why Kambili is so dedicated to her studies. She is isolated from her friends in her desire to please her father - she doesn't stay late after school because her father would beat her for being one minute late. Kambili is an interesting character as all she's trying to do is to survive in an abusive situation in her own way. I have to mention here that there is a particularly graphic scene where Kambili is beaten and has her feet put in boiling water. It is the moment in which her mother finally reaches her tipping point and truly starts to take matters into her own hands. It's the moment in which Kambili finally realises that she's in danger. And I think it's a really big turning point for the entire family. It is in this moment we see that Eugene truly does repent for what he does and we get a glimpse into his own life story. We learn how he was made the bible basher (quite literally) that he is now and how he was also abused in his own life.*

*This book discusses so many important things; it's hard to list them all. It's about hardship and triumph. It's about culture and the loss of it and mostly, it's about finding your voice. It's about finding out who you truly are and becoming the person you were meant to be. It's about facades and changing so much to survive that you lose who you are. Ultimately the book is about a young girl who learns who she is beyond the fears that plague her. The language is what truly makes this story so profound and emotional – it's so intimate and you feel as if Kambili's fears have become your own. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie effectively waves a tale about a family facing domestic violence, the political atmosphere of Nigeria and the religious and cultural conflicts occurring within Nigeria. By focusing on one family, we get a deep and true understanding of the characters and their own individual and interpersonal struggles that make this story so heartbreaking and hopeful.*

WISHING OUR PATRONS AND FRIENDS  
A WONDERFUL YEAR AHEAD  
WE HOPE YOU HAD A  
**WONDERFUL MOTHER'S DAY**



Consider Fund Raising for the Pink Ribbon Day!

<http://www.pinkribbon.com.au/how-raise-funds-selling-pink>

# Initiatives For Women In Need (IWIn) NEWSLETTER Volume 3 May 2015

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