

Schapelle Action Support Group – Victoria

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Australia

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Picture by Steve Pennells, supplied courtesy of The West Australian ©

Keeping Victorian supporters informed in order that should the need arise, we can determine what action we may need to take, either individually or as a group.

If you would like to make a comment to be circulated amongst our group, or wish to be removed from the mailing list, please send an email to the above address.



Christmas Greetings to all



Wishing everyone a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Whilst we will all be enjoying the festive season, I know that we will also be sharing many thoughts for Schapelle and her family. May they soon be reunited.

Now is the time to be sending Christmas cards to Schapelle. Let's aim to cover the cell walls with cards and remind Schapelle that we do care and have not forgotten her.

If you are travelling, please take care and we look forward to your continued support in the New Year.

Stop Press

Important Announcement

Schapelle's family has now formally established a trust fund for donations to support Schapelle and has approved the SASG-V to collect those donations.

Whilst people have been generous in showing their support of Schapelle by sending care packages to her, it has been recognised that many of the items which have been sent can be bought cheaper in Indonesia. Although these are packages are thoughtful, and shows that she has not been forgotten, the money to buy and send these items to Bali could be better used in the purchase of much needed medicine, fresh water and food to help sustain her.

Following discussions with Schapelle's family it is suggested that a financial donation may, in many cases, be more appropriate for the following reasons –

1. The poor quality of food and water provided in the prison requires Mercedes to deliver prepared meals and / or fresh food and water to Schapelle each week day and packaged meals for the weekends.
2. Schapelle's family can continue to purchase what Schapelle needs in the way of clothing, personal and medicinal requisites, generally at much cheaper prices, in Bali.
3. This will help to reduce unnecessary duplication of goods.

4. Elimination of the high cost of postage.
5. Avoidance of long delays (can be up to 5 weeks unless by expensive airmail) in posting Care Packages.
6. The logistics of Mercedes collecting the packages from the Post Office and delivering them, on the back of her motor scooter, will be simplified and made much safer for Mercedes.
7. In simple terms, a cash donation can achieve much more.

Cheques should be made payable to

“Schapelle Corby Trust Account”

and sent to SASG-V, P O Box 149, Mulgrave, Vic, 3170 **Please do NOT send cash.**

A stamped self addressed envelope should be enclosed if you want a receipt.

Please note that the SASG-V is solely accepting and depositing donations on behalf of the Corby family and has no access to the funds.

Thank you for caring.

Achievements of SASG-V.

Less than six months have passed since we formed as a group and joined the ranks of other web sites and forums to foster support for Schapelle. All have worked well together albeit in different ways and we trust that this varied approach will continue for as long as is necessary to bring Schapelle home.

So perhaps it is now time to look back and see what we have achieved in that period.

1. Maintained regular and direct communication with Schapelle’s family

and Kay Danes and acted in accordance with their advice.

2. Prepared “Innocent Without A Doubt’ flyer’s including notes for distribution. Copies have been specifically sent to Canada, Italy, NZ, UK, USA and north, south, east and west across Australia.
3. Arranged promotion of the Flyer on two web sites and three forums.
4. Prepared and distributed a letter on ‘What to write to Schapelle’.
5. Negotiated a copyright agreement for SASG-V to use photo of Schapelle.
6. Prepared a questionnaire for supporters to indicate ways in which they are prepared to assist with support.
7. Prepared and issued Newsletters to SASG-V members every few weeks on average since June ’05. The latest also appearing on two web sites.
8. Arranged two radio interviews on ABC, Brisbane and the Gold Coast, with Kay Danes.
9. Geoff and Suzy met with Bruce Billson, Parliamentary Secretary (Foreign Affairs and Trade) and discussed various aspects associated with Schapelle’s case. (See later report).
10. Procured and arranged free distribution of car stickers and silicon wrist bands.
11. Regular letters have been written to Schapelle since the verdict.
12. At least 500 letters have been sent to politicians, celebrities and human rights groups worldwide by our small core group alone.
13. Encouraged establishment of the NZ group, headed by Ann Boudier in Auckland and efforts have been made to

help establish groups in other states in Australia, but as yet, response has not been as quick as we would have expected.

14. The local 'Leader' newspapers in Waverley and Dandenong published articles on SASG-V in November and have generated positive response.
15. Responsible for collecting donations for the Schapelle Corby Trust Account on behalf of Schapelle and her family.

Supporters Questionnaire

Thanks to all who completed and returned the questionnaire. This has given a fair indication of the areas in which people are prepared to assist with support and will help with planning future campaigns.

It would be appreciated if those who have not responded, would please do so as soon as practicable.

If you know others prepared to support Schapelle, please forward their contact details to me and I will put them on our list. We need to build our support base as much as possible.

Supporters Barbecue

We are proposing to hold a barbecue in Melbourne early in the New Year for all who have responded to the questionnaire.

Please advise if you would be interested.

How can you help?

1. There has been considerable discussion on what we supporters can do and where our responsibilities lie.
2. Only Schapelle's legal team can achieve any positive influence in the Court

process and any attempts by our Government or by individuals to influence the Court's decision would be seen as interference in the Indonesian judicial system. Behind the public theatrics of Hotman Hutapea is a very competent Lawyer and Schapelle and her family have complete faith in his ability.

3. We often feel that stronger pressure should be exerted by our Government to force the issue to a satisfactory conclusion but we would also be very judgemental of the Government if, as a result of such pressure, the Court reacted adversely. Our Government must therefore follow a diplomatic approach if there is to be any chance of a positive result. This invariably means that we will have little or no idea what action is being contemplated or taken at any time.
4. By all means write to Government ministers and visit your local member to express your concerns. Ask questions and let them know that you are genuinely concerned about Schapelle and her situation. Do not be disturbed if you receive the standard replies which have been around for some time. Only the relevant Ministers can make any statements on current and proposed actions, for obvious reasons. Like any good battle commander, they will not reveal their plans or fire their ammunition before they reach the battlefield. What is more important is your letters and representation.
5. Writing letters to Schapelle is probably the most important means by which we can help. This lets Schapelle know that she is not being forgotten. At its peak, Schapelle was receiving 300 letters a day. I wonder if we could increase that to 500 letters a day. Contact SASG-V for tips on what to write.
6. Care Packages. Schapelle's family visits her five days a week (female prisoners

are not allowed visitors on weekends) to deliver nourishing food, clean water, reading material and personal items required for mere survival and which are not available within the prison system. This presents a huge cost and financial strain on the family.

Many supporters have regularly sent Care Packages however most goods can be purchased considerably cheaper in Bali. An over supply of some goods and the inability to store them means that a considerable amount must be given away to others. It is therefore recommended that donations be made to the Trust Fund established by Schapelle's family. Refer Important Announcement on page 1.

7. Small personal items and gifts are still appreciated by Schapelle and should still be sent to her. Please bear in mind however that Schapelle has very limited, and insecure, storage space and most items will be returned to Australia for safe keeping.

Meeting with Bruce Billson

Susan and I recently had a meeting with Bruce Billson, Parliamentary Secretary to the Dept of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

There was a feeling that the Government is involved with further discussions and negotiations which were being kept very confidential.

Some of the questions we asked, and answers, are –

- 1. What is the working relationship between the Government and Schapelle's legal team?**

Very good. The Government has supplied all relevant documents requested by the legal team.

- 2. Why did the Government link the white powder incidents, at the**

Indonesian embassies and Parliament house, in June to Schapelle supporters when the Indonesian media denied this link?

There were letters enclosed with the envelopes and white powder. (We wonder how the Indonesian media would know otherwise?). There was no verification of reports denying this link.

- 3. Was Bruce aware of overcrowding in Kerobokan (13 in Schapelle's cell)**

No, but will enquire. This is a matter for the Indonesian prison system.

There are more modern prisons in Indonesia with more comfortable living conditions however these come at a high price e.g. confined to cell for most of the day, visitors generally restricted to family for about an hour or two each month and separated by glass screens (non contact visits), restrictions on mail, food and care packages.

- 4. What is the likelihood that Schapelle would remain in Kerobokan Prison or be transferred to another less salubrious institution for the remainder of her sentence?**

Not known, Indonesian decision.

- 5. What action is the Government prepared to take after the appeals process is finished?**

Push for Prisoner Transfer Agreement.

- 6. How close are we to having a Prisoner Transfer Agreement finalised?**

The French have been negotiating for several years for a PTA to no avail. This agreement could take up to twelve months as it is important 'to get it right'. The Australian and Indonesian Governments have different viewpoints on different classes of offences and the terms of punishment each should attract. The Indonesian Courts do not want their

sentences re-engineered when a prisoner is returned to Australia as it would be seen as undermining their terms of punishment.

7. If Schapelle is brought back to Australia on a PTA, will she still be eligible for further subsequent remissions of her sentence?

Subject to negotiation of the terms of the PTA. Refer Q6.

8. Upon return to Australia on a PTA would Schapelle go into a mainstream prison or a low security prison where she could expect better conditions?

Not his area of responsibility and decision making however, in his opinion, Schapelle was not a security risk.

Past cases involving Australian prisoners overseas have subsequently revealed a much greater Government involvement than was apparent during those cases. We have no reason to suspect that any less is being done for Schapelle.



Do you wear a yellow ribbon on your lapel?

Don't forget to place a yellow ribbon on your car antenna to show that you care.



Car stickers and silicon wrist bands are still available free of charge, as long as they are used and not put in a drawer and forgotten.

The car stickers read- "**FREE SCHAPELLE - INNOCENT WITHOUT A DOUBT**", are approx 60 cm long and suitable for the rear windscreen of your car. Members have received a lot of positive attention and comments, and it pays to keep a supply of flyers in the car to hand out as circumstances permit.



The yellow silicon wrist bands are printed with "**FREE SCHAPELLE**" and following a practice established in the USA following the Vietnam War, several supporters have vowed to wear the bracelet until Schapelle returns home.

These items have been privately funded. A donation, payable to 'SASG-V' to enable continued supply would be appreciated.

Finally, special thanks to Rhonda, Suzy and Noel for their help and support in all aspects of organisation within this group.



Geoff

Most importantly, keep Schapelle and her family in your prayers.

Not innocent because she is beautiful but beautiful because she is innocent.

