



# the pt'chang report

annual report  
**2002-2003**

**Annual Report 2002-2003**

© December 2003

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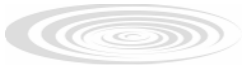
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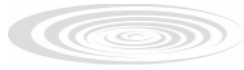
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# contents

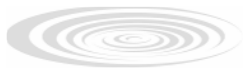
<b>vision statement</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>themes for nonviolent community safety</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>thank you!</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>new developments</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>news, projects &amp; events of note</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>safety at events, parties and festivals</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>peacekeeping teams</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>community education &amp; training</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>fundraising</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>annual financial statement</b>	<b>14</b>





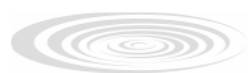
## vision statement

Pt'chang works towards a vision of a world free from fear and violence. We believe that everybody has a basic right to feel safe at all times and that everybody is, in their own way, responsible for creating safety within their lives and communities. Pt'chang takes a pro-active approach to safety. We help to create spaces where all people can experience and express their lives to the fullest. We see ourselves as a small part of a wider movement toward restorative justice systems, toward safe, peaceful and sustainable communities and toward social systems and structures that meet human needs.



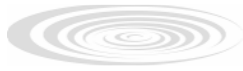
## themes for nonviolent community safety

- We all have the right to feel safe all the time
- We are all responsible for creating safety within our lives and communities
- We can respond powerfully, effectively and nonviolently to violence within our community
- Creating safety is a crucial part of building real and sustainable communities



**thank you!**

Pt'chang would like to thank the following individuals and organisations for their generous and much appreciated support during the past year.



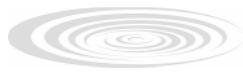
## introduction

This year, Pt'chang has continued to respond to and grapple with the issues surrounding the aftermath of the war in Afghanistan, the Invasion of Iraq, the ongoing so called "War on Terror" - and the way that the US, UK and Australian Governments have reacted to these events.

We have continued to support, resource and work with the expanding movement towards peace and human rights. This has included supporting the ever-growing community protests about mandatory detention of asylum seekers and their treatment within detention centres around the country.

Repression and violent confrontation are very much part of mainstream culture. In this environment, it is important for Pt'chang and other activists to model alternatives to violence that are community based, nonviolent, and effectively organised.

We continue to play a crucial role in encouraging and assisting individuals, groups, and organisations to be pro-active and creative in challenging oppression and violence.



## new developments

Towards the end of this financial year Pt'chang began the exciting new approach of taking on Community Development students for **placement positions** to work within the organisation, and to give them the experience of working within a volunteer, grassroots, consensus-based group.

It is so wonderful to have Cathryn Cullen, and Hodan Abi – Community Development students from Victoria University join the group and take on a range of exciting and important projects

In June 2003 Cathryn also joined Pt'chang in the important role of Administration Co-ordinator, taking over from Elvira Griffiths who left the group to concentrate on her career as a family violence outreach worker. We acknowledge the considerable contributions Elvira made during her extremely active involvement in Pt'chang and wish her good fortune in her future endeavours.

Cathryn also kindly accepted the expanded role of Finance Co-ordinator. We have very much appreciated her considerable efforts in helping us get our financial records in order, and in bringing her calm presence and commitment to working on projects to the group.

We also welcome Elizabeth Wheeler as Fundraising Co-ordinator this year. Elizabeth comes to Pt'chang with a great deal of experience in both the private and community sector as a fundraiser and has already developed and submitted a number of high-quality grant and funding requests over the past year.

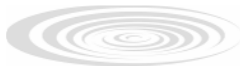
We would like to acknowledge and thank Simon Goss for his role as Public Officer this year, taking over from Jennifer Edge.

Another important behind the scenes contribution that Pt'chang wishes to acknowledge is Paul Mirstchin's ongoing role in maintaining and facilitating the **Pt'chang discussion e-group**.

After many years in development, we finally published the **Pt'chang Nonviolent Community Safety and Peacebuilding Handbook** in June 2003. This project was originally conceived in 1999 after an \$800 grant from the City of Darebin. Pt'chang would like to thank the City of Darebin for their generous assistance and patience. We expect that this 75 page resource will be a valuable contribution to nonviolence activism and practice for years to come.

Thanks once again to the hundreds of brave, resourceful and highly skilled **volunteers**, who make up our Safety Teams, staff the office, attend meetings, write reports, travel long distances, work in the rain or scorching sun, at all hours, to help create a safer place in a world with too much violence.





## news, projects & events of note

The Community Education and Training Team (CETT) continues to reflect Pt'chang's commitment to focusing on providing training and education to community based and grassroots organisations, as well as individuals.

As in previous years, CETT has been very active, providing a number of training courses, including **Peacekeeping One**, sometimes referred to as "PK1", which was run twice this year; and the popular **Peacekeeping Two** (PK2) which expands on the knowledge and skills gained in PK1 (which is a pre-requisite). All were favourably evaluated and enjoyed by the participants.

A series on **Nonviolent Communication** was run by Carolyn Shurey and Vanessa Toy, with great feedback.

Anthony Kelly facilitated training for activists planning on attending the **Pine Gap** protests. Pt'chang had been hoping to field a Pt'chang Safety Team to go, however human resources, as well as financial constraints, prevented us from being able to do this.

Another exciting development for CETT was the appointment of Joanna Mott as our Training Co-ordinator. Jose did a great job in this role from Xxxx until xxxx, and regrettably had to resign from the role due to work commitments. Jose has continued to be an active member of CETT, and we appreciate her enthusiasm and dedication to the training aspects of Pt'chang's work. Thanks Jose!

Anthony Kelly took on this role on a temporary basis after Jose gave notice. We wish to acknowledge him for his tireless contributions to Pt'chang as a whole, and particularly to his behind the scenes work in writing, collating, and organising the training materials into manuals for trainers.

Pt'chang fielded a **Legal Observer Team** at a two day weekend protest at the detention of asylum seekers at the Maribynong Detention Centre. This was well attended on both days and we wish to acknowledge all the volunteers who took part in the team, particularly Andrew Bonfield and Melissa Noonan who co-ordinated the teams.

Following the return of a team of activists who attended a **protest camp at Baxter Detention Centre**, Pt'chang provided a **Debriefing** session to those who wished to attend to assist in processing their experiences there. Thanks to Elvira Griffiths for facilitating this session.

This year's **Topic Nights** built on the successes of previous years and provided a great opportunity for people come together for in-depth exploration of topics of interest. People within and associated with Pt'chang attended sessions on:

Alternatives to Violence Project – training prisoners in methods of nonviolence; and

Restorative Justice movement within the court system – innovations in the inclusion of restorative justice measure particularly within the juvenile justice system.

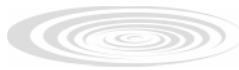
Thanks to Scott and Elvira who co-ordinated these evenings.

**Strategic Planning** has also been an important part of our work this year. We held a Strategy Day, from which overall visions for the group were identified and discussed

and a Strategic Plan Document created. Regular discussions in the general meetings have been guided by the themes and directions in Strategic Plan.

The relationship between Pt'chang and Peace Brigades International (PBI) – with whom we share an office – continued to strengthen. In what seems to be becoming somewhat of a trend, one of Pt'chang's dynamic and active volunteers, Lara Milsom, was offered and accepted the exciting opportunity to travel to Indonesia and be part of the PBI team there. During a brief visa renewal visit to Australia, Lara gave a public talk hosted by Pt'chang about her experiences in protective accompaniment. This was well attended and appreciated by the audience. David Shileds and Veronica Witteven continued their courageous and vital work on the Indonesia Project and our thoughts remained with them as the conflict and human rights situation in Aceh deteriorated sharply in May 2003.

Pt'chang also accepted an invitation to be part of the **Ravesafe Reference Group**. Thanks to Chris Gallard and Luke Fabish for their presence at these meetings.



## safety at events, parties and festivals

Pt'chang believes that everyone has a basic right to feel safe and that approaches to creating safety should be nonviolent and empowering. For six years now, we have been assisting organisers and communities to develop and create genuine community safety at events, and respond to unsafe situations in ways that go beyond traditional 'security' approaches.

We continue to take a pro-active and preventative approach to safety at events, working closely with all parties involved and working as an integrated part of the event, blending with the 'feel' of the event rather than standing out.

Safety teams focus on interpersonal safety issues such as sexual harassment, sexual assault, drug related incidents and interpersonal conflict that are often overlooked or handled inappropriately by mainstream security firms.

Our volunteers are trained in effective nonviolent intervention techniques and conflict resolution skills. They use co-operative, 'power-with' approaches to incidents of aggression, and conflict.

In 2002-2003, we provided safety teams at Earthcore (see report on following pages), Barmah Beats, and Tranceplant

The teams had the capacity to provide:

- Pre-event consultations
- Liaison with police and emergency services
- A radio communication network
- Crisis counselling
- Sexual-assault counselling
- Referral to outside support services
- Alcohol and other drug harm-minimisation strategies
- Nonviolent 'peacekeeping' patrols
- Community safety training or protective behaviours workshops for event staff and/or patrons

As usual, the teams included both women and men, with a wide variety of skills and experience. Pt'chang volunteers on safety teams in 2002-2003 included experienced psychologists, youth workers, drug and alcohol workers, social workers and first-aiders. All are trained in conflict resolution, protective behaviours, nonviolent intervention, and peacekeeping skills. They worked within set protocols and procedures developed by Pt'chang in 1999.

## **earthcore safety teams**

Pt'chang was first requested to provide a safety team at Earthcore in October 1998. Over the past five years Pt'chang has fielded teams at eleven Earthcore events, of teams ranging from 14 to 30 volunteers.

The original and standing role of Pt'chang Safety Teams at Earthcore has been:

- to provide safety and peacekeeping services focusing on interpersonal issues arising including sexual harassment, aggression and conflict;
- Cover the site areas including dance areas, market, car-parks and campgrounds;
- Liaise and work alongside Ravesafe and First Aid regarding any alcohol and other drug issues arising;
- Liaise and work with First Aid, Ravesafe, event staff, Country Fire Authority (CFA), Police and emergency services regarding any medical or other emergency arising;
- Assist CFA with fire prevention by extinguishing candles, lanterns, campfires or other open fires whilst on -site;

Whilst Pt'chang maintains that Earthcore is a professionally organised and extremely safe event, Pt'chang has responded to over 85 separate safety incidents over the eleven events we have been present. These safety incidents have included several that have been potentially life threatening including near fatal drug overdoses, lost children, physical assaults, lost children and adults, a suicidal person and child abuse. From Pt'chang's experience at similar large public events, these incidents are typical and are to be anticipated. A huge range of minor safety related incidents have also been recorded by Pt'chang including, minor altercations, relationship break-ups, lost people, dangerous objects, car and parking issues, etc.

It is to be commended that almost all of the recommendations made to Earthcore in the Pt'chang Report 98/99 have been taken up by Earthcore organisers over several years.

Pt'chang's unique nonviolent, co-operative, peer security approach has been of particular importance which has been recently reflected in the recommendations from such bodies as Crisis Management Australia, the Australian Institute of Criminology and the Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association, all of whom recommend "peer-security" approaches at large outdoor community events. Across Australia and internationally, "peer-security and community safety approaches emphasised by Pt'chang are highly recommended and increasingly implemented.

### **Ballarat earthcore – november 2002**

In terms of area coverage, this site was close to ideal. The event was originally to be held at Mt. Disappointment; however, about six weeks before the event, approval to hold it there was withdrawn due to concerns with fire safety. The alternative site was a large impact crater 30 minutes drive from Ballarat in Western Victoria. Attendance was down slightly as a result of the late change and extra distance from Melbourne.

Eighteen Pt'chang people volunteered for the Pt'chang Safety Team at the event. They were ferried up to site in six cars. Four people arrived Friday night to begin

setting up and the remaining arrived Saturday. Vanessa Toy and Roger Barnett looked after the kitchen, cooking a main evening meal. Radios were distributed from Pt'chang Communications tent.

Patrols commenced at 2pm Saturday and concluded 2pm Sunday. The roster was designed to focus our energies around the peak time of activity, typically around 2-3am.

There were 34 incidents called into Pt'chang Comms and handled by our patrols. Of those, five required incident reports and follow up. There were five First Aid incidents including one requiring a helicopter evacuation. This evacuation and an incident involving two lost and unattended young children were the most serious incidents to challenge Pt'chang and security at the event. There was a high degree of liaison and co-ordination between Pt'chang and the security guards.

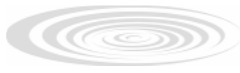
Pt'chang was clearly an important contributor to this largely successful event. Our presence was particularly relevant and valuable in the context of two issues that arose at the event:

### **High Falls**

Finding a nice high spot on top of a cliff or scaffold to test a new theory seems to be a recurring theme at Earthcore. As a consequence, people often fall or jump from very high places. Pt'chang has recognised a need to identify such launching places and patrol them, especially at sunrise.

### **Child Protection**

In the early morning, two young girls aged 18 months and six years were found in the car park. They were very distressed and obviously had been stumbling in the darkness, having mud and scratches from head to toe. They were in danger from vehicles driving around and an unfenced dam some 20 meters from their vehicle. Their carer was eventually located, however it was a protracted and distressing situation that necessitated virtually constant attention until the end of the event. Due to a range of concerns about issues of possible neglect, the Department of Human Services were notified by Pt'chang immediately after the event. The incident raised important issues of policy for Pt'chang with regard to the reporting of child protection issues.



## peacekeeping teams

### **palm sunday**

On Sunday the 13th of March 2003, at the invitation of the Victorian Peace Network, Pt'chang volunteers accompanied the infamously wet Palm Sunday peace march through Melbourne. This event was held as the first stages of the war in Iraq were drawing to a close, and presented an opportunity for the people of Melbourne to once again demonstrate their opposition to the US-led invasion, call for a withdrawal of Australia troops and to highlight the human impacts of the war.

Pt'chang's role was to act as a safety and peacekeeping presence at the march and to support the volunteer marshals organised by the Victorian Peace Network. It was felt that the considerable level of emotions generated by the war in Iraq and the backlash at the domestic peace movement, warranted an extra safety presence at this event.

We managed to field over twenty volunteers on the day. A briefing was held at the Pt'chang office prior to setting up a base and information stall at the Treasury Gardens.

About 5,000 people attended the event despite the soaking rain. A number of Pt'chang pairs were dispersed at intervals along the full length of the march, as well as at the Ecumenical gathering at Federations Square. Several people also present at a Pt'chang information stall at the march's start in Treasury Gardens.

Communications over such a huge area and a large team was facilitated by UHF radios, which also linked us effectively with the Vic Peace organisers and marshals. Pt'chang peacekeepers responded to several minor incidents with aggressive car-drivers along the march's route. We also monitored a small counter-demonstration near the top of Bourke Street. Marshals also assisted with the pace and movement of the march as it made its way through the city and back to the Treasury Gardens.

Overall, there were very few safety issues at the event and no incident reports were submitted. The event was extremely well organised by the Victorian Peace Network and it is commendable that the safety of participants was carefully considered by organisers.

Despite the inclement weather, Pt'chang's volunteers stayed with the march through to its soggy end at about 4pm. The several hundred people hardy enough to stay on after the march enjoyed the performances from the John Butler Trio and other performers billed for the post-march entertainment.

A big thanks to everyone for working so hard on such a testing day: Melissa Noonan, Luke Fabish, Chris Gallard, Lin Padghum, Chris Lacey, Dave White, Annie Beresford, Craig Garret, Ada Conroy, Anthony Kelly, Cathryn Cullen, Sean Bourke, Grant Anthony, Carolyn Shurey, Crina Vergona, Damian Kearny, Joss and Hannah Levy.

## **pt'chang at pine gap - october 2002**

Pt'chang had extensive involvement and presence at the national peace actions against the United States base at Pine Gap, near Alice Springs in the Northern Territory. Designed to coincide with international actions against the infamous 'Star Wars' missile defence system, the Pine Gap actions were held in October 2002.

Liz Scarfe and Anthony Kelly ran a day long nonviolence training for Melbourne based activists prior to the actual trip to Pine Gap.

The actions, which were strongly supported by the local Alice Springs Peace Group, saw about 500 people from Alice Springs and around Australia participate in marches, blockades and numerous creative actions highlighting Australia's role in supporting America's nuclear war fighting strategies.

Anthony Kelly and Rivkah Nissim from Pt'chang were on site for the four day action event playing a key role in Police Liaison and Legal Observing on site. Anthony also ran a quick nonviolent direct action workshop on the road leading to the base which later became the basis for two days of consistent blockading of worker transports going in and out of the base.

## **first ever national activist debriefing network!**

In the lead up to the Pine Gap actions, Elvira Griffiths and Nicole Reading were also busy organising Australia's first ever nationally-organised activist debriefing network. Utilising Pt'chang's extensive activist network and contacts from the Australian Nonviolence Network, we were able to organise debriefings in Melbourne, Castlemaine, Darwin, Brisbane, Cairns and Adelaide. The dates and times of these debriefing sessions were promoted at Pine Gap, with hundreds of leaflets being distributed to activists before their trips home.

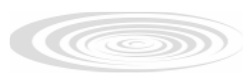
Pt'chang would like to thank Louise Cook-Tonkin, Kerry Calcraft, Charlotte Mc Cabe, Mary Heath, Margaret Pestorius and Jeremy Urquhart for their participation in and support for the After Pine Gap debriefing network.

## **baxter 2003**

Anthony Kelly ran a one day training session for a few volunteers planning to act as Legal Observers at the national actions protesting against Australian Government's detention of asylum seekers, at the new Baxter Detention Centre in South Australia in April 2003. The training at Melbourne Trades Hall was supported by several student unions and co-ordinated with Legal Support teams in South Australia. Pt'chang also developed and supplied copies of a Legal Observer Handbook specifically for Baxter, based upon the handbook for the Sydney WTO actions earlier in 2002.

The actions at Baxter ran for four days and saw several hundred people from all over Australia converge on the notorious detention centre. The actions were characterised in the national media by provocative actions and high levels of police violence, including an armed special operations police response inside the activist camp after a reported sighting of a rifle. It turned out that the sighting was actually a camera tripod.

After the Baxter actions, on Sunday 27 April Elvira Griffiths from Pt'chang ran a small activist debriefing session at the Irene social centre in Brunswick. About ten activists who had been at the Baxter actions attended and spoke about their experiences.



## training activities

This year Pt'chang Training Working Group was renamed the Community Education and Training Team to reflect the team's expanding role and growing professionalism and strength.

Members of the Pt'chang Community Education and Training Team this year included Mellissa Noonan, Vanessa Toy, Elvira Griffith, Craig Garret, Anthony Kelly, Nicole Reading, Carolyn Shurey, Grant Anthony, Liz Scarfe and Joanna Mott.

It is with sadness that we said goodbye to Nicole Reading and Carolyn Shurey, who both retired from the Training Team late in 2002 after many years of excellent training and work with Pt'chang. Elvira Griffith also retired from the training side of Pt'chang in March 2003 after many years of wonderful committed work and support for the team.

Joanna Mott, with over 6 years of experience in international development, training program development in East Timor and having worked in Central and Central America, took over the mantle of Training Co-ordinator in 2003 and spent five valuable months supporting and developing the Training Team. We thank Jose for her fantastic and tireless contribution to Pt'chang this year. Jose remains a trainer with the team after retiring from the Training Coordinator position due to work commitments. Anthony Kelly took over as acting Training Co-ordinator for the final part of 2003.

The team organised an extensive training and community education calendar over the past financial year.

In July 2002 we ran a Dealing with Difficult Situations Short Course on Thursday evenings. Issues covered included dealing with sexual assault, suicide, aggressive behaviour and mental illness.

Another eight session Nonviolent Community Safety and Peacekeeping Course was conducted during August and September 2002. This was a very well attended and successful course.

Carolyn Shurey and Nicole Reading also ran a unique series of three interrelated but independent evening sessions on Nonviolent Communication Skills. This was a highly successful and a very popular form of training for Pt'chang this year.

In April 2003, we conducted another weekend Nonviolent Community Safety Training, in which twenty new people were introduced to Pt'chang's peacekeeping skills.

In June, the Team organised another course of our very popular PK2 training weekend. This was a follow-up and extension of the Nonviolent Community Safety and Peacekeeping Course. Twelve people attended the training held at the beautiful Commonground in Seymour, Victoria. The weekend featured intensive workshopping of issues around violence, power and community safety, using case studies, role-plays, exercises and games. PK2 was facilitated by Anthony Kelly, Melissa Noonan, Jose Mott and Craig Garrett.



## community education activities

After many years in development, we finally published the Pt'chang Nonviolent Community Safety and Peacebuilding Handbook in June 2003. We expect that this 75 page resource will be a valuable contribution to nonviolence activism and practice for years to come.

We also responded to several requests for short workshops for community organisations. These included:

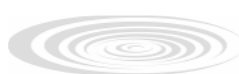
Dealing with Difficult Situation training for the Collins Street Baptist Church Urban Seed project;

Legal Observer Training for the Baxter 2003 actions; and

Nonviolent Training for Friends Of the Earth.

As a part of our role at community events and festival, Pt'chang also produces and distributes numerous pamphlets, leaflets and information booklets on a range of community safety and violence prevention issues.

One such leaflet, intended for bar staff and security staff, concerns drink spiking or drug facilitated sexual assault and provides information on what to watch out for and how to effectively respond to such incidents. The one page leaflet was developed in consultation with the Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA) especially for events where Pt'chang was in attendance.



## fundraising

This years fundraising activities included a video night hosted by Irene of notable episodes of the cult TV series: "Buffy the Vampire Slayer".

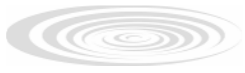
The Pink Palace also hosted on our behalf a very popular "Extreme Games Night – featuring nonviolent co-operative games, that Pt'chang is noted for, particularly in our training's.

We also held two successful Garage Sales during the Summer Months to raise some much needed funds for the group.

We have continued our efforts to secure funding from philanthropic trusts, thus far without success. Funding submissions were sent to these organisations:

- Myer Foundation (for Legal Observer Team)
- Yarra City Council (for subsidies for training participants who are residents of City of Yarra)
- Mercy Foundation (for Youth Safety Teams)
- Department of Family & Community Services (for volunteer equipment grant)

Competition for each grant is intense and the situation is especially difficult for a small organisation such as Pt'chang, with little grant-management experience. For the next financial year, we will try to build more strategic partnerships in the hope that this will increase our effectiveness as an organisation and assist us to secure funding.



# annual financial statement