



OWN MATTERS

Newsletter of the Older Women's Network New South Wales

Vol.3 No.6 – July 2006

CONTENTS

Gaining Perspective	1
A Culture of Violence that Must Change	2
Coordinators' Report	3
Poor Australians Left Behind	4
Human Rights Act	5
Grannies on Trial	5
Letters to the Editor	6-7
At & Beyond The Rocks	8-11
Sydney	8
Aboriginal Support Circle	8-9
Sutherland	9
Ashfield	9-10
Macarthur	10
Illawarra	10
Nowra	11
Bankstown Greek	11
Theatre Group Report	12
Doing Jessie Street Proud	12
Film Review	13
Book Chat	13
Crystallised Impressions	13
With Apologies to Banjo Paterson	14
Outback With Joan	14-15
How Things Have Changed	15
OWN Advocacy	16
1/4ly Meeting Women's Health	16
Joan Johns Financial Advice	16
Vale A Progressive Conservative	16
Bring Back the Basket	16-17
Karen Tan DV Study	17
Poisonous Plants	17
Notices	18-19
Elderwomen NZ event	18
Volunteer Small Equipment Grants	18
Exhibitions, Talks & Tours	18
OWN Australia National Conf	18
OWN NSW State Conference	19

Gaining Perspective

Having had the luxury of a holiday gives you the kind of break that allows for a little perspective and reflection. On the dawn of yet another US space shuttle launch it seems apt to compare my simple ambitions with the more grandiose assertions of an alliance of national leaders, who would have us believe that man needs to travel as far away from earth as possible in order to gain a better understanding of himself and his origins. Well he might. I have absolutely no doubt where I originated. I give thanks to my mother, and to the planet that sustains me every day I wake to draw another breath.

After watching 'Round the Kitchen Table with Pearlle's Group last month, I was really brought to an awareness of the distinction between my concept of Australian cultural identity, and the one that we have come to promote and export around the world. It's left me asking: "Where the bloody hell are we?" In this issue of OWN Matters there are a number of reflections on this changing, and often confronting creation of our Australian identity. As older women we are often in the position of being social and cultural caretakers, so we must be really sure we are not swindled into wet-nursing aspects of our culture that we find abhorrent. At the same time we must ensure that we undertake the serious promotion of areas that empower women and girls in order to give them a more positive vision for the future than the one they are receiving through contemporary popular culture.

One aspect of 'Round the Kitchen Table that really resonated for me, was the notion that in Aboriginal culture there is no concept of fixed boundaries, people do not own land, it owns them. When I think about the bush suburb where I grew up, I have always sensed this, this feeling of 'belong place'. In this philosophy there are no fences, it is not about exclusion, it is about working with the world, and with each other - in harmony. It is a philosophy of inclusion and acceptance. It respects the planet that we live on, and the whole environment – physical, cultural, emotional and social that sustains us.

Every day we hear how Australia is improving our international relations. I am breathless with wonder as I hear of our negotiations to sell uranium, process refugees, combat terrorism, send troops, and boldly go where no man has etc. etc. So just how far have we really progressed from the days of colonize and conquer, damn the consequences?

Beth Eldridge

Older Women's Network NSW 87 Lower Fort Street Millers Point, NSW 2000

Phone:9247 7046 Fax:9247 4202 email:ownnsw@zipworld.com.au web:www.own.org.au

Produced with the assistance of the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care

with project funding from the NSW Department of Health and assistance from the City of Sydney

Who Are We?

The Older Women's Network (OWN) NSW is the peak body for 20 groups in NSW. OWN promotes the rights, dignity and wellbeing of older women through a range of activities and resources, and advocates on issues of interest and concern to older women.

OWN Matters is the newsletter of the Older Women's Network NSW. It is published 11 times a year. The annual subscription for individuals is \$22 and \$40 for organisations & includes GST.

Members of OWN groups in NSW are encouraged to contribute to **OWN Matters** with items of interest to older women and Letters to the Editor. They can be sent by mail or email marked Attention – Editorial Team. Please include contact details. Contributions must be received by the second Tuesday of each month.

OWN Matters is copyright. Material can be reproduced, but only with acknowledgement of its source.

ABN 36 992 030 904

Editorial Team

Beth Eldridge, Daphne Lera, June West, Helen Young, Helen Vincent, Lorraine Inglis and Judith Mustard.

Layout and Design

Beth Eldridge, Polly Gow and Enid Leighton.

Membership & Subscriptions

Ermes Solari and Maureen King.

Mailout Team

Ermes Solari, Wilhelmina van Dorp, Pat Rayne, Noel Carpenter, Marie Williams, Mary McCusker, Elaine Reynolds, Lola Cummings, Bev Cameron, Joyce Henwood and Trudy Davis.

POINT of VIEW

A Culture of Violence That Must Change

The serious issues of devastating violence and sex assaults on women and children in some indigenous communities in the Northern Territory has been highlighted in recent weeks following an ABC Lateline program, where Central Australia's chief prosecutor, Dr Nanette Rogers, disclosed that victims and witnesses are often silenced by fear of violent reprisals or by cultural taboos on speaking out.

There are many factors contributing to these shocking revelations. Aboriginal affairs are primarily a federal responsibility, and the government has known about these problems for many years through countless reports, including Senate enquiries going to all levels of government, including John Howard. Nothing has been done. This violence and abuse is not just a failure of law and order. The causes - community dysfunction, family breakdown, poverty, poor health, housing, education, unemployment, alcohol, drug and petrol abuse, and hopelessness and despair - all need to be addressed.

Violence and sexual assault of women and children were not part of Aboriginal culture before the arrival of the white man. Present problems are bound up with the history of oppression of Aboriginal people and their present state of extreme disadvantage. Instead of giving legal aid to violent men, governments need to provide help to the victims, and the men sent to rehabilitation centres, not jail. Existing laws are dangerously inadequate and there is great difficulty in getting police officers to serve in remote and dangerous places.

Of \$37.3 million dollars allocated two years ago by government for family violence partnership programs, only \$5.5 million dollars have been spent. The Northern Territory Government scrapped a Justice Department scheme to place crime prevention officers in problem communities and withdrew funding from a learning centre for troubled camp children in Alice Springs. They have also failed to cut the number of liquor outlets outside some of the most notorious town camps. With ATSIC's elimination by government, Aboriginal affairs are being "mainstreamed" by white bureaucrats, since most of the Aboriginals employed in these departments have left. There are no longer any Aboriginal people left in the federal government. (Continues page 4)

Judy Atkinson, Professor of Indigenous Studies at Southern Cross University, believes that "only education can break the cycle." The Vice-chancellor and Dean of the university recently visited Canberra to ask

Pat Zinn's article continues Page 4

DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in OWN Matters are not necessarily those of the Older Women's Network NSW, and we do not guarantee the accuracy of the facts in articles supplied by members. The Older Women's Network NSW accepts no responsibility for any loss occasioned to any person acting, or not acting, upon any material in OWN Matters.

OWN NSW

Coordinators' Report

The timing of *Own Matters* production schedule meant that two late May/ early June events did not make the pages of last month's issue except by mention in BTR. But both of these were important to be noted as they represented aspects of OWN activities that might sometimes be overlooked. The first, on May 12, was the Annual Presentation night by the Women's Electoral Lobby, of the "Edna Ryan Awards", making it known that steps taken to assert equality for women are as alive and well as ever.

The second, on June 8, was the quarterly members' meeting that, due to a new style initiated by Beth, was so successful it went a long way towards the networking, exchange of ideas and common purpose that must always be an integral part of bringing members together. How can we bottle that enthusiasm, keep it going and benefit by each others experiences?

Our Annual conference is almost upon us and offers the next opportunity to capture the spirit of OWN as we swing into setting the stage for the next year! The prominence given to the launch of the report of the major "Women Owning Health Project" immediately before our

conference starts, should put us in a position to show our strengths throughout the two days.

We, the coordinators, can't wait to start reaping the benefits of the newly installed electronic office equipment. Throughout our current term of office, as volunteers we have felt the need to be giving more support and assistance to our overworked staff. Many demands of administration have restricted their capacity to assist the development of group building. We will be looking to turn that position around with greater and easier efficiency, so come on all you helping hands out there, your contributions could be just what are needed.

There is still much to be done before we can turn our minds to the planning of a new year with a newly elected team to manage the affairs of the Network. Has your group registered delegates and non-delegates and discussed issues to be raised? Can your group support the annual OWN Australia Conference to be held in September in Perth? Look for details in next issue of *OWN Matters* and in the correspondence sent out to your group.

Barbara Burnham

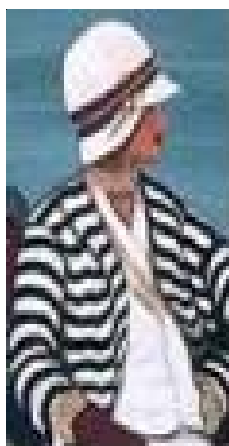
Conference Entertainment 2006

Despite a complete lack of spontaneous response from members who have artistic talent (and I know you are out there), we have managed to put together a very nice program for the after-dinner entertainment. It will be opened by OWN members from Wollondilly, who will surprise and awaken you with their stirring drum rhythms from Argentina. The group, Wollondilly's OWN Heartbeats, have been playing together for over five years under the guidance of Cindy Fernandez, who has taught the original rhythms of her forefathers. They have been applauded everywhere they have performed and are in much demand. This is your opportunity to hear and enjoy them.

Also on the bill are three beautiful Thai Dancers. Their costumes, poise and grace show the ancient art of Thai Dancing. To finish the evening we have the Estonian Choir featuring songs and voices of Estonia. The night will be one of multicultural music and dance, so I hope that you will show your appreciation by turning up to hear them. For me, I can't wait!

Barbara Malcolm

Take a Ticket



The Lady in the Hat is one of the charming feature panels of *Tea for Three*, a stunning handmade patchwork quilt which is first prize in the Conference raffle. We can't imagine how, after countless hours of work, its creator Barbara Malcolm could bear to part with this

potential heirloom, but it could be yours for the cost of a raffle ticket (**\$1.00 each or three for \$2.00**). Other prizes include a "Tea for Two" gift hamper, a transistor radio, cosmetics and other attractive goodies ...

Life and Liberty in Context

A Culture of Violence That Must Change (continued from Point of View, page 2)

the Indigenous Affairs Minister, Mal Brough, to fund a program designed to help communities break a worsening cycle of violence. They are seeking \$5.7 million dollars for a 3-year, 3-state project to manage crises, then heal the scars of cyclical abuse through the posting of doctoral students to teach communities to help themselves by training leaders, schooling children and relieving rage, grief and trauma. Not all abused children become offenders, but intervention is critical to stop victims repeating trauma on others.

All is not gloom, doom and hopelessness. There are many success stories of communities working successfully. There needs to be a broadly accepted representative body created by Indigenous people to sit down with government bodies and work out solutions together.

Pat Zinn

Eora: Mapping Aboriginal Sydney 1788-1850

Here is the online information about the **Eora: Mapping Aboriginal Sydney 1788-1850** exhibition currently showing at the Mitchell Library.

The exhibition chronicles the clans and families of the region and their connections to the land, each other, and the English colonists. Rarely seen maps, artworks, manuscripts and relics, drawn from collections in Australia and overseas, are also on display. You can also check out some of these maps, journals etc. on-line –

<http://www.atmitchell.com/events/exhibitions/2006/eora/about.cfm>.

It's awesome!

Exhibition: 5 June 2006 - 13 August 2006

Open: 9am to 5pm weekdays, 11am to 5pm weekends

Phone: 02 9715 8066

Admission: **FREE**

Contributed by Jody Lively



Old Specs are in Demand

Quite a few of us have had cataract operations in the last few years and we may not need our old specs. Please send them to Mr. John Bond at Sarah Claydon Village, unit 84/130 Princes Highway, Milton NSW 2538. To date he has sent over 17,000 specs to Papua, New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Cook Islands, Pakistan, Ghana, Solomon Islands and India.

Contributed by Pat Zinn

Poor Australians Left Behind

"The health of people living in poverty and on low incomes is not keeping pace with others", the Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS) has stated in the 2006 release of a health report presented every two years by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

"People living in poverty are more likely to experience higher stress, substandard or insecure housing, limited access to services and a lack of work or education chances, - all of which lead to poorer health. At a time when the Federal Government has a record budget surplus, it has a golden opportunity to improve the lives of Australians with an unacceptable standard of living, which includes the majority of Indigenous people." ACOSS President Lin Hatfield Dodds said.

Statistics in *Australia's Health 2006* include:

70% of Indigenous people die before the age of 65 years compared with 20% of non-Indigenous Australians.

Indigenous children aged 1 to 14 have a mortality rate 2.5 times higher than non-Indigenous children.

Mortality is 50% higher for the unemployed than those who are employed (unemployment is associated with other risk factors such as mental illness and cardiovascular disease).

Nearly 40% of the population did not see a dentist last year. One third of lower- and middle-income adults are unable to access proper dental care.

Contributed by Wendy Hall

summary of ACOSS Media Release 22/06/06

Seeking Participants for Video

Jan Wood wants to video older women whilst interviewing them about "growing older creatively, gracefully, and productively". She would like to spend half an hour with you or your group. Jan worked with the Theatre Group several years ago on "Suitcase of Panels" depicting the activities of community organizations, with an explanatory audio cassette tape. These panels were exhibited with the tape accompaniments to audiences all over NSW. Jan also has a TV spot on TVF (formerly Channel 31) called, "Coffee Break". It is broadcast at 8.00pm Sunday nights, Midnight on Wednesdays and 1.00 pm Mondays. If you are interested in participating please ring Jan on: 9810 7016

Peggy Hewett, NSW Management Team

in Contemporary Australia

Human Rights Act

We at the Human Rights Act for Australia campaign have been exceptionally pleased with the growing support for the campaign since it was launched last October. We are confident of achieving the goal we set last year, to have our Human Rights Act tabled and debated in the federal parliament as a private members bill by the end of 2006.

A Human Rights Act is a legislative bill of rights. We have prepared a draft based on Australia's international human rights obligations and the experience of similar democracies such as the UK, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa. Australia is now the only Western democracy without one. You can download the draft Bill from the website.

We have recently held successful launches in Perth, Brisbane and Hobart to go with the launches in Sydney, Canberra and Adelaide from last year. We plan to hold a launch in Darwin in July and a large launch in Melbourne in mid-August. Sign up for campaign updates so you know when upcoming events are planned.

We have extended the consultation period until July and will continue to accept submissions up until that time. Please consider making a submission on behalf of your organisation. Some of the submissions already received have been loaded on the website, which you may wish to view. Consultation guidelines exist on the website, which may assist you when preparing a submission.

We are proud to have launched a dedicated website at www.humanrightsact.com.au. This site is an excellent source of information on the campaign and the issues. It has information about the origin and aims of the campaign, reports on the launches, frequently asked questions, human rights events, even podcasts. We encourage you to visit it and send supporters of your organisation to visit.

Sign on for campaign email updates at www.newmatilda.com/humanrightsregister/. We will then be able to keep you informed when we begin to pressure the parliament to consider this important piece of legislation.

Please contact me if you have any inquiries on (02) 9211 1635 or at

humanrightsact@newmatilda.com.

*contributed by Nick Carney Executive Officer
Human Rights Act for Australia campaign New
Matilda*

U.S. Grannies on Trial

The trial opened in New York of 18 grandmothers, arrested for disorderly conduct after they sought to enlist in the US army, as a protest against the war in Iraq. The grandmothers, whose ages range from 50 to 91, were arrested in October during a protest outside a military recruiting station in Times Square. They were charged on two counts of disorderly conduct, for blocking the recruiting station door and refusing to comply with a police order.

"We should be praising these women, not prosecuting them," said noted civil rights lawyer, Norman Siegel, who was defending the women in court.

"Coming to this damn court is nothing compared to what is happening in Iraq," said Marie Runyon, 91.

"We have a right to be angry," added Vinnie Burrows, who declined to specify her age. "The war in Iraq translates into a war against the people of the United States, because the billions of dollars being spent are draining money from social services, health and education," Burrows said.

On April 27 the grannies established, in New York City's Criminal Court, that they were not committing a crime. Judge Ross concluded that they were engaged in lawful, peaceful protest and were quite clearly not criminals. They had persevered throughout the entire week, seated on the hard wooden benches - not conducive to comfortable sitting for aging rumps.

"Each of us had a chance to testify and protest our opposition to the war," said Joan Wile.

"Our kids are still dying and being horribly maimed in Iraq. Iraqis are still dying and being deprived in every conceivable manner. We can't take the time to congratulate ourselves but must continue as Universal Grandmothers to try and save the next generation."

Extract from www.michaelmoore.com

Contributed by Ariel Marguin,

Proud to be part of Million Mothers March

Letters to the Editor

Dream Run

I read with interest a letter from Nancy Brown re a book she had read by Dorothy Horsfield (*Paul Lyneham – A Memoir*) incorporating her late husband's own words (May *OWN Matters*). I would like to suggest that Nancy would enjoy Dorothy Horsfield's book *Dream Run*, published in 1992 by Minerva Australia.

Beryl Winter

Decades of Difference

On my return from recent travels abroad, I was very pleased to read that *OWN* is drawing in younger older women into the organization.

I'm 61. At 55 or 60, women generally, but not always, have different interests and concerns to women who are older. I am much more likely to go trekking, or attend a political protest, or enjoy a blues music gig, with someone in my age group.

My children and I are a generation apart. We live in the same suburb, we share common political beliefs, and we see each other regularly. For example we have dinners and BBQs, go on wine tasting tours, share an interest in new technologies, and (often) enjoy similar shows or movies.

But they grew up in a different era and they are three decades younger than I am. Many of their concerns are not mine. I am no longer concerned with career development and paying off my mortgage, or trying to get one, and I am certainly not thinking about when I'll start a family. My interests lie in exploring the meaning of retirement: in funding it, in developing other networks, in establishing my identity in retirement.

In *OWN* we have members whose ages range over a number of decades. While women of 55 or 60 might have much in common with

women of 75 or 80, there are things that are important to women of 60 that are no longer important to many women of 70 or 80. There are also things that are important to women of 75 that are not yet important to many women in their late 50s and early 60s.

We are all members of *OWN*. We are all older women. We have much in common. But we have differences that are simply related to the number of decades we have lived.

Many women have had years to build up their networks, some of them within *OWN*. On the other hand, younger women are still building their retirement networks, and most will be drawn to be with women of their own age group - with their peers.

If *OWN* wants to include newly older women, then it has to acknowledge our needs - to find friends with whom we can share a whole range of interests or activities. This is not to devalue the interests and activities of women who are older than us, it's about recognising different needs.

Lorraine Inglis

Older Woman a Write-Off?

At the age of seventy I resisted when my GP told me I should have a mammogram as my last one was two years before. The doctor said she would not prescribe medication for an infection unless I had a mammogram. When I explained my reasons for not doing it again she finally said, 'Well, you'll be eighty ten years from now, and that's a long life.' Although relieved we had agreed on this compromise, later I nevertheless felt I would be a write-off if I had breast cancer.

Recently at a consultation with a neurosurgeon, I refused to go to hospital to have an angiogram as I could not bear the thought of going to

hospital again. The specialist said that she understood some of her elderly patients had grown tired of living and they had the right to make their own choice. The rightness of choice surely rests with patients regardless of their age?

A friend, a former aged-care worker, told me of cases where she heard and saw elderly patients being dismissed as not being worthwhile for the necessary care and effort to be made to keep the patients alive and as comfortable as possible.

Dying with dignity – or living with dignity? Preferably both, but not often possible.

Louise Anike

Palliative Care

I'm so pleased to see that Jenny McFarlane is available to discuss Palliative care. Being able to access the superlative palliative care team at the Sacred Heart Hospice during my late husband's illness made a tremendous difference to the quality of our lives during the last six months of his illness. Mind you, I knew that palliative care was available but I had to make a fuss before Jack's oncologist arranged for us to receive this wonderful service.

Having these professional, caring, compassionate people just a phone call away helped us through all the complications of those last few months, and the last month spent at the hospice before he died helped our whole family accept his inevitable death with courage and strength.

Pat Zinn

Free Media

Lately a few things have bothered me more than somewhat, not things happening but two things which did not happen in our so-called 'free media'.

Letters to the Editor

A Leunig cartoon showing the Prime Minister kneeling before a table on which there was a heap of brown stuff, was refused by the editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* on the grounds of 'poor taste'.

The other non-event was a program made for SBS and not shown for reasons of 'security'. It was filmed in West Papua by a lone journalist and was to show the conditions which make those people seek refuge in our country. It was to be in two parts. The first was shown a few weeks ago, the second has not been shown, although this week we did get to see a program on the same subject. But it was an account of the life of refugees after they have escaped over the border to New Guinea, where they are understandably most unwelcome. So, is this a case of 'don't mention the war' as far as Indonesia is concerned?

Helen Monaghan

Fare Warning?

If you are a full pensioner and have entitlement to four trips by rail per year you may not be aware that these are no longer free.

As from 1 March 2006 Countrylink will charge what is euphemistically called 'a booking fee'. As it is set at 15% of the full fare it is really a discounted fare, hardly a booking fee. Apparently this was advertised widely during November and December of last year. I must be blind as I certainly didn't see it. I wonder how many of you read about it anywhere. If you have had your pension card renewed since 1 March you will find on the accompanying information that this is mentioned.

After raising the bus fare to \$2.50, and now charging this so-called booking fee what next will be imposed on pensioners who are already living below the poverty line, and who received nothing from the budget.

I am intending to contact the State Minister for Transport to find out why this decision was made, and if any organisation representing pensioners was consulted. I will keep you informed.

Cate Turner

Too Old?

What has age got to do with it? Some decisions made on donor transplants?

Seventeen years ago, my elder brother, my only sibling, was diagnosed with having liver cancer following colon surgery. Chemotherapy was tried and abandoned as non-effective. Laurie was given twelve months to live, and according to what he was told, a liver transplant was not an option because he was sixty-three. He and other older people are facing this form of age discrimination.

Many donor organs are in very scarce supply. How is the decision made for the allocation of an organ? Is it based on dire need? Is it a direct age-based decision? Is it based on existing or potential productivity? If the latter is the case, how is productivity measured or expected?

Older people may be involved in some work or voluntary work. Many older people have relationships such as partners, brothers and sisters, adult children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews and friends. The affection and connection from these relationships are in themselves productive - and may or may not have a dollar value.

In cases of totally dependant patients, many have very little or no anticipated improvement. Questions can arise, such as, 'Is this person young or old, entitled to have twenty-four hours, seven days a week and a number of years and commitment?'

Moral questions such as these may never have conclusive answers.

Perhaps they will remain case-by-case decisions.

My brothers died eight months after the prediction of his life term. The last eight months were miserable even with palliative care in his home.

There will always be people who will choose to undertake any treatment that is offered to them, although an Advanced Care Directive offers people the opportunity to make their 'druthers' known. Except it seems that a transplant for some people is not the answer - or if you are deemed to be 'too old'.

Louise Anike

Can OWN help?

Having been in frequent contact with residents in nursing homes and retirement centres, I am depressed by their isolation, by their regular lack of contact with people, whether of their own family or others who want to express their friendship towards them. Some centres arrange contact with schools and kindergartens, but in most cases the elderly lead a life of loneliness and deprivation of regular company outings due to neglect or the laissez-faire attitude of those responsible.

Would it not be possible to have a 'mixed' population in these centres, the younger residents there consisting of people who genuinely want contact with oldies because of the warmth and kinship they feel? It is the main responsibility of the State Government to take the necessary initiative to provide guidance and direction to the Councils so that they may conduct the whole operation most effectively for the benefit of those in need.

Is there anything that OWN could do, contacting appropriate authorities, initiating action on these suggestions?

With great hopes,

Lucy Raig

At and Beyond the Rocks

Sydney

We're hoping that the lively discussion of the past month bodes well for the future of OWN Sydney.

A packed meeting room welcomed guest speakers Wafa Zaim and Nada Marhaba of the Muslim Women Association (MWA). Wafa spoke of her education in Christian and Muslim schools in Lebanon, of marriage, religion and culture. She became involved in the MWA while at TAFE and has since helped provide skills for other Muslim women. Wafa now speaks publicly, particularly in schools, to break down ignorance about the Muslim community. Despite war, family difficulties and discrimination 'one keeps on going and has to move forward' she said. Amid much laughter Wafa and Nada helped OWN members array themselves in clothing that they had brought along. Lively discussions continued over a shared lunch.

There was another full house upstairs at Windmill Street of 'Reactivated Political Activists'. The Women's Reconciliation Network video *'Round The Kitchen Table'* was a good opening to discuss loss of culture and language and the need for trust and bridge building. Despite an age range of 25 years and disparate positions, members found common ground and language. Time went by so quickly. Everyone has the opportunity to speak - of their frustrations about the huge changes that are

occurring nationally and internationally, but also their passions and involvement in supportive organizations. The next get together will be held July 21.

The younger-older group's choice of a Saturday afternoon for a get-together proved a popular one for their discussion, or maybe it was the topic, on 'Loss and Grief'. Beth, in opening up, referred to grieving that can happen, for example, with loss of family member, a relationship, job or a breast. Heather Parkes, then led women through the Petrea King 'Quest for Life's healing process: the need to find a tribe, to share experiences, to develop trust and have a belief to carry one through.

Representatives of the OWN Sydney Violence Against Women committee were among the 360 who registered for the Australian Association of Gerontology symposium, "World

Elder Abuse Awareness Day" held recently. This international acknowledgement of the problem is welcomed; however little research has been done, and much elder abuse is hidden. Revelations of sexual assault that occurred in a Victorian institution recently has spurred the need to address elder abuse happening in Australia (5% of over 65year olds, and includes physical, psychological, sexual, neglect and increasingly, financial abuse). Most of the day's contributions were relevant to service providers and programs are now being developed to raise awareness

of elder abuse in aged care services, such as providing a safe environment, better selection, screening and training of staff.

OWN Working Group

ASC Report

At the quarterly meeting, the Aboriginal Support Group decided that the best response on our part would be to read poetry composed by indigenous writers, and were thrilled that Lorraine McGee-Sippel was able to come and read one of her poems. If we had had more time, she would have read the two poems from our book and I had also earmarked a poem to read. However, it was a fabulous meeting, and just great to meet all the magnificent women who took part.

At our last meeting on the 1st May we had invited Aboriginal women from the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry at Penrith to come for lunch, and they pitched up, about eight or nine of them, with Sister Naomi and Dakota, a much-loved grandchild, at about 12.45, having taken two taxis from Central. We went to meet them last November where we heard about their activities such as gardening, meditating with a beautiful Buddhist young lady whom we met, art-work and scarf-making, with which they supplement their incomes. I think I can safely say that we all had a good time, except that we all missed Betty Little, who was visiting her sick brother in Canberra.

At and Beyond the Rocks

As to the present horrific reports of domestic violence and the rape of children, it's an issue that we have talked about for all the years our group has been in existence. Most of our speakers had had these awful experiences as children, and later suffered abuse by their partners. At present I'm wading through a mountain of newspaper articles and e-mails, there are no simple explanations or answers to these awful revelations, and DV and child rapes were NOT part of indigenous culture, but years of government and state neglect, underfunding, antipathy, paternalism, arrogance and not acting on report after report and ignoring the input of indigenous people has led to the present barbarous situation. However, the Federal Government will now be forced to act and I hope they do so in wisdom and compassion.

Sadly, Pat Zinn

Sutherland

Sutherland group meets once a month at the local United Services Club and afterwards members have a leisurely lunch together at the Club cafeteria. Some of us stay on for the meeting of our Wellness Centre Management Team. Yes, sometimes we do get our wires crossed, but as we join together for a number of functions each year this can be helpful also. Coming up soon is the Sutherland Shire's Annual Arts and Crafts Festival, an event of long standing. We share the work load of running a stall together and contribute and sell pre-loved goods and take the opportunity

to mingle with other community groups in the area. A few of our women have in the past entered and won divisions in the arts and crafts exhibition and competition. This event is a major fund raiser for both our *OWN* group and the Wellness Centre

Minutes of our monthly meetings and an events diary are sent out to every financial member, and this month reminders for annual fees and renewals of *OWN Matters* subscriptions have been included. We find this the sure way of keeping in touch, as a number of our members are unable to attend meetings because of frailties or caring responsibilities as well as health hitches or the happier events of holidays. But women still like to be kept informed; keeping in touch is what we are about.

We are planning our next outing day to be a tour of The Rocks! Yes. As a number of our newer members are curious to see the hub of our Network, what better way than making this a special event, taking advantage of the unique setting in the middle of this most historic area of our home city. We hope to bring lunch to Windmill St where we have been promised some history of the area and a peek at the office at our Lower Fort St. premises where it all happens. If we are well organised and make an early start we should fit in one or two other places of interest around our 'home.'

We have decided to take a new approach to 'Discussion' meetings, choosing topics, times and venues by popular demand. We need to get a bit creative here

and find the magic formula. The interest and benefits are recognised, but we need to find the right recipe. Members who went to the last quarterly meeting are full of enthusiasm for the demonstration by Illawarra, and want to give it a try. We'll report how we go.

Barbara Burnham

Ashfield Greek OWN

Here is some good news from the Ashfield Greek OWN.

After the Christmas break, 2006 began in our new premises in the Ashfield Council room. For the past ten years we were paying rent at different locations and now we are rent free! It's wonderful!

We would like to thank the Ashfield Council and Beth Eldridge for helping us to write our submission. Our members are thrilled with this new room.

In March the Ashfield Council invited us to participate and celebrate International Women's Day with other groups from the area, and it was an excellent day.

The 28th April, after two weeks break, we then celebrated our Greek Orthodox Easter, (time is flying!) with homemade biscuits and the traditional Red eggs.

On Friday fifth May we received Gina Dimitriou representing the Department, of Environment who gave us a talk and demonstrated how to clean our houses without the use of toxic chemicals. Our members enjoyed this seminar and afterwards each of them received a bag of goodies and informative pamphlets.

The 16th May the Ashfield group

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS * NEWS FROM THE GROUPS * NEWS FROM THE GROUPS * NEWS FROM THE GROUPS * NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

At and Beyond the Rocks

will celebrate Mothers' Day at the Cyprus Club, Stanmore, with their families. The price is reasonable and the food is delicious.

The Ashfield Greek OWN is planning to knit some blankets for the Greek Nursing Homes.

For the month of June we are thinking of asking Nutrimetics beautician to demonstrate to our members how to look after themselves in the cold winter days.

Near the end of June we will have a meeting to plan the activities for the rest of the year.

With our best regards to all the OWN groups, have a happy winter.

Maria Camelin

Macarthur

On 7 May 2006 Macarthur OWN celebrated its ninth year. Birthday celebrations were combined with our end-of-month bus trip. "Hi ho, hi ho, it's off to work we go" on a bus bound for Brooklyn and a luncheon cruise on the Hawkesbury River as far as Lion Island. Sixty one OWN ladies had a ball - although a few were a bit green around the gills. Liberal lashings of dry ginger ale did seem to help some of us ... we even got to steer the ferry. Next year's celebrations will have to be really superb to top this day.

We are selecting new charities each year to donate to on a rotating basis, and also have a tin for the Campbelltown Hospital, which yielded \$62.40 last week, we then match the amount, part of our philosophy is to put back into the community.

We are co-hosting a Biggest Morning Tea with the Benevolent

Society on 24th May.

In June we are helping with Bensocs Winter Solstice Fair - which keeps us busy and out of mischief.

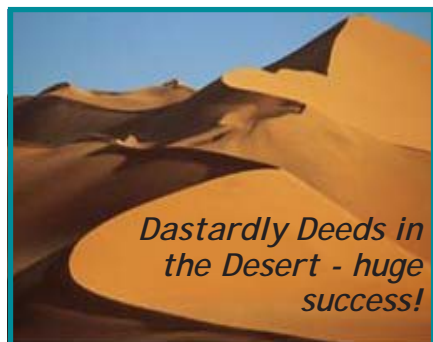
We continue to have a monthly guest speaker; all have been good, and several exceptional. On the second Wednesday we have a birthday cake for those celebrating their birthday that month. We also have a Mother's Day morning tea.

We seem to be going from strength to strength, with over 80 members and an average of 48 attending each meeting.

Glenda Wood & Glend Laird

Illawarra

Illawarra OWN has been enjoying an upsurge in membership during the last few months and we currently have 42 members. We celebrated our 8th birthday on 16th March with a very pleasant lunch in Wollongong. On 2nd April our Seniors Week Event organised by Jacque Skinner proved to be a success. Our play reading group was so delighted with the success of the play *Dastardly Deeds in the Desert*, which we had co-written, that we immediately



began writing another play! We are very proud of one of our members, Joan Hilton, who won the Wollongong City Seniors Week Art Award.

On 9th May seven of our members attended the special OWN NSW Quarterly Meeting at Mott Hall. Many thanks to Beth and her team for arranging this. It was a great opportunity for us to learn about other OWN groups and to meet other members.

On 18th May Sharon Wall, one of the authors of the book *My Health, My Future, My Choice*, spoke to our group about Advanced Care Directives (sometimes called "living wills"). Members found her information very helpful and interesting and she has agreed to come back and speak to us again. She also distributed copies of the Benevolent Society's booklet *Your Future Starts Now* which includes useful information on such topics as wills, powers of attorney, enduring guardianship etc.

We held our own version of the "Big Morning Tea" on 1st June and managed to raise around \$100 for cancer research. This was also the date of our Annual General Meeting. Congratulations to Roma Bates, our new coordinator and many thanks to Norah Alexander for all her hard work over the past two years.

The Silvert-o-w-n-s have been enjoying themselves entertaining many different groups this year. They are missing their guitarist Marjorie Heathwood, who has not been well. We all wish her a speedy recovery.

Peggy Rodden

At and Beyond the Rocks

Nowra

The highlight for Nowra's OWN during Senior's Week in April was a workshop they held, with some co-operation from the local council, entitled 'Challenges of Our Times'.

Shoalhaven community has a higher percentage of people in the community over 70 than either Illawarra or NSW. The challenges are, keeping the best of good health by active participation in all that the community offers, and encouraging life and living outside the home. Many are unaware of what is available - *OWN* for example.

Our member, Isabel MacCallum, had many discussions about the workshop with the council's Community Officer. A venue at the local hall was obtained and refreshments arranged. Attendance numbers were boosted by a group of students from the local TAFE. Feedback from them has been positive and appreciative.

The program included a talk from the Council Officer about the demographics of the Shoalhaven, which highlighted the increase in the ageing population. A young instructor from the Shoalhaven City Council Leisure Centres gave an enthusiastic talk on the importance of keeping our bodies active to ensure good health and pointed out that there were a number of activities available.

The speaker most people had come to hear was the geriatrician from the local hospital. Her topic was dementia, entitled 'Ageing Well'. Her talk and power point presentation took us from the



importance of maintaining our health by good nutrition and exercise, to the signs of Alzheimer's. She encouraged us by saying that forgetfulness is normal from a certain age.

She emphasized the importance of keeping socially connected, having a good doctor relationship, and particularly guarding against falls. She also took us through various health challenges we face as age advances. It was a most positive, practical and instructive morning. Unfortunately time did not allow for many answers to the questions her talk provoked.

The program finished with entertainment from the Shoalhaven Shufflers, some energetic and ingenious women, strutting their stuff. Later many present found themselves forming an acapella group. Members were present to support and promote *OWN*.

Barbara Apperley

Bankstown Greek

Back on 2 May we started practicing with a new dance instructor for a period of ten weeks. We are all very happy

because we will be learning six new dances to add to our repertoire.

June has been a busy month for us - apart from our usual scheduled activities such as meetings, exercise, and group outings, on 15 June we attended the 10th Birthday celebrations of the Bankstown Women's Wellness Centre. It was a large event for our local groups, attended by important women involved in the establishment of the Wellness Centre. Attendees witnessed the official launch of the book: *In Our OWN Words: A Collection of Writings from the OWN Bankstown Wellness Centre*. Everyone enjoyed the day and stayed for a lovely lunch and the cutting of the cake ceremony.

Many, many thanks to all those ladies who worked so hard and made it possible for us to attend, and made the day such a success.

On 16 June our group visited the Bankstown Council Roundhouse for the launch of the *Sharing Cultures Through Culinary* book. Our dance group performed along with many others as part of the multicultural festivities. We enjoyed the wide variety of food and dancing that was all part of this event.

On 29 June our group travelled by bus to board a cruise on the Hawkesbury River with the friends we'd made at the Women's Wellness Centre. On the way back, we stopped at the Homebush Lolly and Chocolate Factory, to top up the calories we'd burnt enjoying each others company all day!

Kind regards,

Connie Kondilios

Theatre Group Report

This month the Theatre Group report takes the form of an interview with our much appreciated musician Ann Cunynghame.

How did you get involved with the Theatre Group (TG) as a musician?

When copyright became an issue for the Theatre Group, I was a pianist for some creative songwriters at Bondi Pavilion. Through Peter Winkler, resident musician, I was contacted by Peg Hewett to provide music for material to be used in the TG shows. The songs were *Older Women That's Our Name* and *The Years 2000 to come*. They are still part of the repertoire.

After seeing the TG perform at a North Sydney convent, I was impressed with their professionalism in delivering witty and satirical material, so when the guitarist Bernice Lynch (a legend) was retiring through ill health, I was invited to join the group, firstly as a performer and then as a musician. Since this time, I wrote music for the *Bank Sketch, Flat Shoes, Laughter Song, Picking On, Remember When, and Hurry Hurry* – thus defeating the copyright ogre. I must acknowledge here the many brilliant people who have provided the words: Louise Anike, Marie Williams, Josie Jackson, Brigid Sen and Joan Modder. Hope I haven't missed anyone!

Doing Jessie Street Proud

I recently visited the Jessie Street National Women's Library with Dorothy Cora, who has generously offered to research and write a history of the OWN Theatre Group. We had an appointment with the Archivist to look for old OWN newsletters stored in the library.

Archives, in my mind, have always been associated with small, dark, dusty rooms and musty librarians. So with this in mind, (I was attending the Edna Awards later on that night), I packed a voluminous long-sleeved top to cover my glad rags, old shoes to scuff around in the dust, and soap and towel to clean up afterwards.

Imagine my amazement to find a large, bright, airy Library attended by an extremely welcoming archivist who had, between the time Dorothy made the appointment and the day of our meeting, generously sorted through boxes of material hastily sent to them in 2001. After a friendly chat about our needs, we busied ourselves photocopying 53 Theatre Group reports published in OWN newsletters from 1993 to 1998.

I was so impressed to see women's history being so cared for – they really do our wonderful Jessie Street proud.

If you have an interest in researching women's history, I can heartily recommend that you use the Library's resources. It also has a small lending section. The Archivist is the only paid worker while the rest, probably ex-librarians, are volunteers. We were told that future funding is uncertain, which is really worrying – without at least one paid worker the Library will not be able to function nearly as well, despite its wonderful new home.

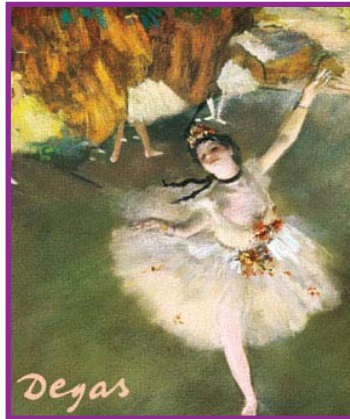
Contact Jessie Street National Women's Library, Ultimo Community Centre, C/R Harris and William Henry Streets, Ultimo, phone 9265 9486 or check the website www.jessiestreetwomenslibrary.com

Peggy Hewett

Across the Arts

Film Review - Ballets Russes

It is a common experience. You go to the cinema and hope to see a good film but return home less than satisfied. The opposite is true of the Ballets Russes. So much so I have returned to see this film a second time, and I would like to recommend it to others.



This is a documentary featuring the remaining dancers of the original Ballets Russes. They are a totally delightful group of people who lead us through their beginnings as dancers and on to life as prima ballerinas with the company. There is footage of the Company dancing all over Europe and the United States. There is backstage gossip and scandal, glimpses of costumes, toe shoes and makeup, curtain calls and curtain drops due to lack of funds and many other wonderful tales, all told with the utmost humour and candour.

To have the opportunity to see these gifted dancers as they once were and now are, elegant older people, still teaching and inspiring others is worth the trip to the movies. It is on now in certain cinemas.

See it and be enchanted!

Daphne Lera

Book Chat

The Ha Ha Man: Sandy McCutcheon, Harper Collins 2005

A Short History of Progress: Ronald Wright, Text 2005

Imperial Ambitions, Noam Chomsky, Hamish Hamilton 2005

These books, one from a remainder table and two from the local library all deal with the perilous state of our world.

Sandy McCutcheon's *The Ha Ha Man*, a story of terror/horror in Afghanistan and theories of conspiracies in this country, takes place in 2001, the Time of the Tampa, Children Overboard, the sinking of the SievX, the year of 9/11.

A survivor of the perpetual war in Afghanistan

comes here with the help of *The Ha Ha Man*, a political journalist turned undercover activist on behalf of refugees.

The action moves between Canberra, Brisbane, an unnamed detention center. There is a scene of high comedy when a number of high ranking bureaucrats are upstaged by a few Aboriginal women. One wonders why this imaginative contemporary novel should be remaindered, maybe because the first 30 pages, taking place in Afghanistan are of unrelieved horror.

There is a peaceful resolution with the protagonist planting trees back in his homeland. I read this epilogue with a sense of irony on the very morning of the day when two war lords of the West planted trees in Washington.

Ronald Wright's short history could well be subtitled *Apocalypse Now*. The 200 or so pages can be read at a sitting if you are so inclined. Here is a succinct account of civilizations from the beginning of time ultimately destroying themselves, none more so than our own, increasing exponentially till we are left to wonder what our descendants will get to eat and drink.

Noam Chomsky's *Imperial Ambitions*, follows the same format as previous conversations with David Barsaman. He examines the doctrine of the United States, in its desire to achieve imposing its version of democracy everywhere, particularly where oil is found. He emphasizes the responsibility of the educated classes to curb this ambition, a responsibility those classes are slow to recognize

Chomsky concludes his book with much the same observation as that made by Beth in her editorial for the April issue of *OWN Matters*.

Neither of these two books are a heavy political essay. They are meant for general readers, that's us!

Helen Monaghan

Crystallised Impressions

Slow progression by the jade green pool,
deliberate as the droplets falling
in the secret alcove of the wall.
Peacock blue shimmering,
feathers trail and rustle-dry.
Dry rustle, dry rustle-
time span caught in silence.

Valwyn Edwards Wishart

National Pride . . .

With Apologies to Banjo Paterson

I had written him a letter,
Which I had, for want of better
Knowledge, sent to where I met him at the wheat board,
years ago.

He was chairman when I knew him,
So I sent the letter to him
Just on spec, to make the point that "*Howard doesn't want to know*".

And an e-mail came directed,
Not entirely unexpected
(And I think the same was written in some Middle Eastern
Bar).

'Twas his CEO who wrote it,
And verbatim I will quote it:
"Trevor Flugge's gone to Bagdad and we don't know
where he are.

But when he left Australia,
He was going to meet with Alia,
A trucking mob in Jordan, who were keen to grease the
wheels.

"For 10 percent commission,
They could swing Saddam's permission
To get our wheat accepted; it's the mother of all deals.

"But I guarantee, Prime Minister,
That there's nothing at all sinister.
The chaps at DFAT told us that the sums looked quite
okay.

"When you're selling wheat in billions,
What's a quick 300 million?
If it keeps the Nationals happy, it's a tiny price to pay."

Sitting here at Kirribilli,
I've been thinking, willy-nilly,
That it's somehow reminiscent of the children overboard:

But I can handle Rudd and Beazley,

As I always do, quite easily
By endlessly protesting that there's nothing untoward.

I'll tell Bush next time I meet him
At The White House, when I greet him,
That I'm sure he'll understand about the wheat board's
quid pro quo.

He'll forgive this minor error
In the global War on Terror
When I look him in the eye and tell him "*Howard didn't know*".

*Contributed by Trude Kallir from the WIAPF
Conference*

Outback With Joan

A photograph in *The Australian* of the School Principal
in a remote area Aboriginal community kneeling in the red
desert sand beside two Aboriginal children, brought back
memories to me. My daughter Susanna was a remote area
teacher and I was lucky enough to stay with her many
times.

The photograph reminded me of the day we set off for
Mulga Bore School in Utopia 250 km from Alice Springs,
our 4WD Troopie bumping over the corrugated pot-hole
road. It was the first day of term and when we arrived
there were no pupils. It's a timeless land out there – clocks
and calenders unimportant, birthdays not celebrated. So
we drove around the Community, Susanna calling, "School
Day", and suddenly little black bodies came running
towards us smiling and waving and hopped up into the
Troopie. No gathering of satchels, lunch boxes or books.
Susanna made the lunch sandwiches at school.

Several toddlers cried when they couldn't come with
us and had to be taken back home yelling and protesting.
Three girls in their late teens came with us. "They are keen
to learn, these great kids," said Susanna. As there are no
High Schools in remote areas, education stops at Primary
level, so Susanna welcomed them into her class, and did
her best. I looked back at them – all crowded into her
Troopie. 'Fasten seat belts' is a joke out there.

And now in July, Doug and I are off to see our other
daughter who is Doctor in Charge of the clinic at Oenpelli
in Arnhem Land. We go on the Ghan to Darwin, hire a
4WD to Jabiru, and then across the East Alligator River to

Cultural Memory

Oenpelli. The Wet was big and long this year, with Oenpelli isolated for five months and the river in flood. Imagine our daughter's excitement when, two weeks ago, she was able to drive across the river to Jabiru and have a cup of coffee at a coffee shop! Luxury indeed!

Can't wait until the 12th July.

Contributed by Joan Johns

How Things Have Changed

What we didn't know didn't hurt us.

My Mum used to cut chicken, chop eggs and spread mayo on the same cutting board with the same knife and no bleach, but we didn't seem to get food poisoning. She used to defrost hamburger on the counter AND I used to eat it raw sometimes too. Our school sandwiches were wrapped in wax paper in a brown paper bag, in the height of summer, but I can't remember getting *e coli*.

Almost all of us would have preferred swimming in the river instead of the local pool.

The term *cell phone* would have conjured up a phone in a jail cell, and a pager was the school PA system. We all took gym, not PE... and risked permanent injury with a pair of high top Dunlops (only worn in gym) instead of having cross-training athletic shoes with air cushion soles and built-in light reflectors. I can't recall any injuries, but they must have happened because they tell us how much safer we are now.

Speaking of school, we all said prayers and sang the National Anthem, and staying in detention after school caught all sorts of negative attention. We must have had horribly damaged psyches. I thought that I was supposed to accomplish something before I was allowed to be proud of myself. I just can't recall that we were bored without computers, Play Station, Nintendo, X-box or cable TV.

I must be repressing that memory as I try to rationalise through the denial of the dangers that could have befallen us as we trekked off each day about a mile down the road to some vacant lot, where we built forts out of branches and pieces of plywood, made trails, and fought over who got to be the King of the Castle. What was that property owner thinking, letting us play on that lot? They should have been locked up for not putting up a fence around the property, complete with a self-closing gate and an infra red intruder alarm.

Oh yeah... and where was the Benadryl and sterilisation kit when I got that bee sting? Mum pulled out the 48-cent bottle of Mercurochrome. Now it's a trip to the emergency room followed by a 10-day dose of a \$29 bottle of antibiotics, and then Mum calls the solicitor to sue the council for leaving a hazardous flowering nature strip next to a children's playground.

We didn't act up at the neighbour's house either, because if we did we got our bum spanked (physical abuse) there, and then we got our bum spanked again when we got home.

Mum invited the door-to-door salesman inside for coffee, kids choked down the dust from the gravel driveway while playing with Tonka trucks (Remember why Tonka trucks were made tough — it wasn't so that they could take the rough Berber in the family room).

Our music had to be left inside when we went out to play and I am sure that I nearly exhausted my imagination a couple of times when we went on two-week vacations. If my parents were still alive I would be obliged to sue them for the danger they put us in when we all slept in camping grounds in the family tent.

Summers were spent behind the push lawn mower and I didn't even know that mowers came with motors until I was 13 and we got a Victa. Where was my safety equipment? Anything could have happened!

How careless were my parents? Of course, they weren't the only psychos. I recall Arthur Crundle from next door coming over and blowing up his bungers on the front verandah just before he fell off and broke his arm. Little did his Mum know that she could have owned our house after the legal settlement. Instead she picked him up, apologised, and whacked him across the head for being such an idiot, before they took the bus to the public hospital. It was a neighbourhood run amok — suburban insanity.

To top it off, not a single person I knew had ever been told that they were from a dysfunctional family. How could we possibly have known that? We just didn't have access to group therapy and anger management classes! We were obviously so duped by so many societal ills, that we didn't even notice that the entire country wasn't taking Prozac! How did we ever survive?

LOVE TO ALL OF US WHO SHARED THIS ERA!

Contributed by Josie Jackson

OWN ADVOCACY

Quarterly Meeting of the Government/Non-government Women Health Workers

In the Sydney West Region, Women's Health falls into the Community Health section. The Women and Heart Disease Project based in Blacktown has proved tremendously successful, Betty Johnson is our contact there. Northern Sydney Area Health were able to secure state wide funding for a research project into sexual assault in aged care institutions after a successful pilot.

The 3.5% increase in salaries for workers in Non-Government projects will not be fully funded for the next three years - this was discussed at length.

During Anti-poverty week in October, Women's Health will do a paper on Women and Poverty, highlighting the circumstances under which Older Women are living in poverty. They are also producing fact sheets on Women as carers; Women and Mental Health; and Women in violent situations.

The Benevolent Society is in partnership with The Brotherhood of St Lawrence & the Smith Family looking at financial education and independence and their relationship to Domestic Violence.

There will be a Women's Health Conference in November.

Renate Watkinson

Joan Johns' Financial Advice

The best way of saving money is to pay off your credit card. This way, you earn seventeen per cent.

This hot tip came from my grandson after receiving his first pay cheque.
Joan Johns

Vale A Progressive Conservative

When the late Beryl Evans, then aged 62, was elected to Parliament in 1984 as a representative of the Liberal Party, she told the NSW Parliament that although she was a relatively mature person her considerable experience of the outside world meant that she could make a valuable contribution to public life.

She was Government Whip from 1990 to 1991 and in September 1991 she led an unprecedented walkout by women MLCs protesting against the introduction of the Procurement of Miscarriage Bill.

Beryl enlisted in the WAAF in 1942, and after the war became a passionate advocate for servicewomen's rights. She attended Anzac Day ceremonies, marching down George Street in her stiletto heels, and led the WAAF Association's contingent waving from her wheelchair less than a month before her death.

Immaculately presented with her silver hair and driving her bright red Nissan sports car, Beryl was instantly recognizable. She was well respected, feisty, committed and highly regarded for her common sense, insight, humor and energy.

Beryl was a strong supporter of the Older Women's Network, engaging the Theatre Group on a number of Senior's Week occasions to perform at Parliament House, where she enthusiastically joined in by helping us sing our songs but with different lyrics. She was also instrumental in engaging the Theatre Group to perform for a WAAF reunion. One of our fondest memories of Beryl is of her riding pillion on a Harley Davison behind

a bearded bikie down George Street on another Senior's Week occasion.

When she was not endorsed to stand as a candidate in 1995 Beryl resigned from the Liberal Party after 48 years membership declaring, "I'm not on the scrapheap, there's plenty of life in me and there's



plenty of life in most people over the age of 60. Australia has an obsession with youth. We can't go on forever ignoring older people."

We entirely agree with her sentiments and will continue, as Beryl did, to raise our voices against ageism in all its forms.

Peg Hewett / Lucy Porter

Bring Back the Basket

Once there was a young couple who lived with the husband's father. This old man was very troublesome as he was very bad tempered and never stopped complaining. Finally the couple decided to get rid of him. The man put his father in a large basket which he slung over his shoulder. As he was preparing to leave the house the man's son, a little boy aged 10, asked, 'Father, where are you taking grandfather?' The man explained that he was going to leave him out on the mountain for a while to fend for himself. The boy kept silent as he watched his father walking away and suddenly he



shouted, 'Father, don't forget to bring the basket back.' Surprised the man asked the boy, 'Why?' The boy replied, "Well, I'll need the basket to carry you away when you are old.' The man quickly brought his father back to the house and ever since took care of him well and attended to all of his father's needs. From *How to Live without Fear and Anxiety* by K. Sri Dhammananda

contributed by Patricia Graham

Karen Tan OWN Study on Abused Older Women

Despite the fact that older women make up the majority of senior people in our society who are abused, financially exploited or neglected by family members, very little is known about their experiences. This situation exists because such abuse of older women creates secrecy barriers and fears which are difficult to overcome.

If you are a woman who has been emotionally or physically abused, neglected, or financially exploited by a family member as an older woman (over 65 years of age), researchers from University of Sydney invite you to participate in a study on the abuse experiences of older Australian women. By telling your story, you will help toward breaking the silence and secrecy surrounding this sensitive issue. The findings from this study will also assist health professionals who work with abused older women by giving them in-depth knowledge of the abuse experience and so help them to provide better care. If you are interested in being a part of this study please call Karen on landline (02) 9797 7943 or mobile (0401) 816 554.

Your participation will be totally confidential.



POISONOUS PLANTS

The drought had bared and browned the paddocks, so the alpaca breeder decided to give his animals a treat and bring them to the house yard for a green pick.

In minutes, Ricardo, an 85kg, fully-grown male alpaca was dead. He had eaten a common garden plant with green, leafy foliage and pretty white flowers with metallic-blue eyes - the South African daisy *Osteospermum ecklonis* - which grows in profusion in many suburban gardens. The leaves contain toxic levels of hydrocyanic (prussic) acid, and toxicity is typical for cyanide poisoning.

If that daisy could dispatch 85kg Ricardo so quickly, perhaps it's worth checking out the other plants in our gardens, especially if we are visited by young grandchildren. A yearling baby puts everything it encounters into its mouth, so children of this age are especially vulnerable. Older children can easily be taught which plants are to be avoided - we all grew up safely without harm from the plants listed - so it's really the tots we have to guard.

If you suspect that your little treasure has swallowed something nasty, check for vomiting, stomach cramps, irregular heartbeat, burning to the mouth, or convulsions (fits). The type and severity of symptoms will vary according to the type of plant eaten. The most common problems are stinging around the mouth, and skin allergies.

First Aid

Skin contact - gently wash the skin with clear running water.

Eye contact - irrigate the eye with clear running water for 20 minutes.

Swallowed plants - remove any remaining bits and wash out the child's



mouth.

Difficulty breathing, unconscious - phone for ambulance on 000.

If you need to go to hospital, take a piece of the plant with you, if possible.

The number of the **Poisons Information Centre is 13 11 26**. Keep it near your phone.

Westmead Children's Hospital has published a list of poisonous plants, which are listed and categorised below:

Danger! Don't plant

Asthma Plant (Stick Weed), Rhus, Yellow oleander (seeds are poisonous), Unsafe for Kids, African daisy, Cactus or other succulents with spines, Dumb Cane (*Dieffenbachia*) Hot chillies, Mushrooms, toadstools, Poisonous, Treat with Caution, Angels' Trumpets (flowers can cause hallucinations...don't tell adventurous teenagers!), Cycads (bright red and yellow seeds contain toxins), Grevillea (especially Robyn Gordon) ... can cause dermatitis; cover up when pruning.

Oleanders (although bitter taste will deter). Train them as standards to keep leaves and flowers out of small children's reach. Poinsettia (sap is an irritant), Rhubarb leaves, White Cedar (the yellow seeds that remain after leaves have fallen), Yesterday Today and Tomorrow (*Bransfelsia spp*). Seeds are poisonous, especially for dogs. Prune after flowering to reduce seeding.

Some plants have poisonous roots or bulbs...not such a problem, as they are safely underground. These include Agapanthus, Amaryllis, Arum lily, Daffodils and other narcissi, Foxgloves and Lily of the Valley. So unless your yearling grandperson is a dedicated digger, these should be no problem. But be careful where you put these plants if you're pulling them out.

Information for this article was gathered by Connie Condilios and Helen Young from The Children's Hospital, Westmead and 'Our Gardens'.

NOTICES

Elderwomen - New Zealand weekend event

The Elderwomen's Connection is a weekend event organised by *Women Of Wisdom* in New Zealand. It will be held the first weekend of Mar 2007 (Fri 2nd. Sun 4th) at the Taipa Bay Resort in the Far North of New Zealand. The goal is to provide a forum where Elderwomen can meet and share wisdom, life experiences and the celebration of the 3rd Stage of their lives. Women of all ages are welcome. We will offer workshop experiences, ideas, discussion and connection time in a safe and supportive environment. We encourage Elderwomen to embrace an enjoyable, productive 3rd age, a time of ever increase wisdom. Our website is www.womenofwisdom.org.nz

Gay Cooper, Secretary

Volunteer Small Equipment Grants - 2006

www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/aboutfacs/programs/sfsc-vseg_2006.htm

On 9 June 2006, the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Hon Mal Brough MP announced funding of \$3 million for the 2006 Volunteer Small Equipment Grants (VSEG) to help Australia's volunteers support their vital work.

This funding will provide grants of up to \$3,000 (GST inclusive) for community organisations to help them purchase small equipment items that will make the work of their volunteers easier, safer and/or, more enjoyable.

Volunteers make an immense contribution to our society by giving up their valuable time to help others and their own communities. Since 2001, the Australian Government has provided over \$29 million in funding to assist more than 14,000 community organisations. These grants are an

ongoing part of the Government's *Stronger Families and Communities Strategy - Local Answers Initiative*.

Applications close at 5pm AEST on Friday 21 July 2006.

Organisations with special needs (hearing or speech impaired) may contact the Department on TTY **1800 260 402** between 9am - 5pm AEST Monday to Friday.

Exhibitions, Talks and Tours

Museum of Sydney: The glamour and style of Sydney in the 1920s and 30s are captured in the stunning imagery of Harold Cazneaux in *Thoroughly Modern Sydney*, which opened 1 July at the Museum of Sydney.

Listen to remarkable stories, favorite places, and what it means to be a 'Sydney-sider' in *A Night on the Town*, at the Museum of Sydney on Wednesday 12 July. Join curators Howard Tanner and Inara Walden for a special viewing on, Wednesday 19 July or join the regular series of floor talks taking place throughout the duration of the exhibition.

Elizabeth Bay House: A series of contemporary installations by Australian and Swiss artists is displayed throughout Elizabeth Bay House in *Ten[d]ancy*, on display from 8 July.

Elizabeth Farm: You can enjoy a fireside chat over hearty winter soup and pudding at Elizabeth Farm's *Traveller's Inn*, Saturday 29 July.

Hyde Park Barracks: Discover who and what lurks in the shadows after dark at Hyde Park Barracks Museum, in the evening tour *True Tales of Sad Souls*.

Vaucluse House: Experience the unique beauty that is *Vaucluse House by Candlelight*.

For further information, please contact Melanie Flannigan, Tourism Coordinator at Historic Houses Trust on (02) 8239 2327.

Bequests to the Older Women's Network

If you would like to include a bequest to OWN in your Will, the following options will guide you in its wording.

Please specify which Older Women's Network you wish to be the recipient of your gift: Older Women's Network NSW or the *Older Women's Network, Sydney*.

Option No. 1

I devise the sum of \$ to the Older Women's Network for the general purpose of the Older Women's Network OR the specific purpose of.....

such purpose being consistent with the aims and objectives of the Older Women's Network, to be administered by the Older Women's Network.

Option No 2

(for a proportional bequest)
I give% of my estate to the Older Women's Network for its general purpose or the specific purpose of.....

The gift you make to the Older Women's Network will be an enduring record of your generosity.

OWN National Conference

The OWN Australia 2006 National Conference is almost here! Dates are September 25 to 27 inclusive. The venue will be the Point Walter Ministry of Culture and Recreation in Perth, WA.

You can still get great airfares, there's some fabulous and affordable accommodation close by, so why not make this the Spring Break you deserve? Catch up with your friends in the network and enjoy everything that WA has to offer. Go on, you know you want to!

OWN Sydney Notices

Subscribe NOW!

Subscription to *OWN Matters* is \$22 per year, these are due every JULY.

Payment method

I enclose a cheque/money order for \$22 made payable to OWN NSW
OR

Please debit the following credit card for \$22

Visa

Mastercard

Bankcard

Card no.

____/____/____

Exp. date __/__/__

Name on card (please print)

Signature _____

Address _____

State & Post Code _____

I need the audio version

I'd love it on email

Email only - don't post

Email address: _____

The NSW State Conference July 17 & 18, 2006 is being combined with the launch of *Kicking Up Autumn Leaves* – a report based on the stories of wellness from three OWN Wellness groups. The Governor, Her Excellency, Professor Marie Bashir AC, will be launching the report. Be a part of it and make 2006 a year to remember!

Members and friends are welcome to attend all activities.

Wellness on Wednesdays

9.30am-11.45am every Wednesdays

Held in Mott Hall, Argyle St., Millers Point at the terminus of 343, 339, 308, 431 and 433. Our program of gentle exercise and tai chi, at \$4 per session, are lead by accredited facilitators. Early cuppas and morning tea are free, why not bring a sandwich and stay for lunch and a chat?

Film Discussion group

Tuesday, 11 July

You are invited to join with us to see *Ten Canoes*, and then have something to eat. Please ring Yetty on 9665 2050 to check the session time. Other films recommended for viewing are *Solo* and *Caterpillar Wish*.

Discussion group

10.30am-2.30pm, Friday, July 21 and August 11

The **Reactivated Political Activists** group will meet again at 75 Windmill Street, Millers Point.

Have an early cuppa with us then proceed upstairs, and bring a sandwich for lunch. Contact Pearlle on 02 4285 5373 or e-mail pearliej@bigpond.net.au

Inner-West Networking group

· **Saturday 8th** at 2-4pm **IWNG Meeting** in the Community Room, Leichhardt Market Place (Ground floor behind Tandy). For networking and support. Discussion: The Way Ahead: our aims, plans, format for the group, including members' stories on how they came to the group.

· **Every Tuesday** at 2pm **IWNG Coffee** Bar Baba/Manfredi, 31 Norton Street, Leichhardt (near the Italian Forum).

· **Saturday 22nd** at 2-4pm **IWNG Meeting** in the Community Room, Leichhardt Market Place (Ground floor behind Tandy). For networking and support. Half-hour discussion topic: Brainstorming ways of setting up networks for emotional support.

Buses serving the area are: 470, 435, 436, 437, and 438

All OWN women are welcome. Just turn up or contact the OWN office on 9247 7046 or Jan on 9692.9400

Women from other areas are welcome!

Younger Older Women's group

5.30pm-8.30pm, Friday, July 21 - we continue our discussion on grief & loss at 87 Lower Fort St. RSVP essential. 9247 7046

**IF UNDELIVERED PLEASE RETURN TO:
Older Women's Network NSW Inc.
87 Lower Fort Street
Millers Point NSW 2000**

**SURFACE
MAIL**

**POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA**

OWN Matters

**Print Post Approved
No. PP239 337/00007**