



OWN MATTERS

Newsletter of the Older Women's Network New South Wales

Vol.5 No.7 – August 2008

Off to a Great Start

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As a result of our July Sate Conference we are now able to welcome our new OWN NSW Management Team! These wonderful women bring their experience and enthusiasm to the support of our state-wide network. Decisions about OWNs priorities for the next 12 months are welcomed from all members and groups, and your suggestions will assist us to develop our new strategic plan.

OWN Sydney has undertaken this process in the last couple of months, calling for submissions from members on the future direction for this, our oldest group. They have received some energetic and innovative proposals and are building a clearer picture of what the Sydney network means to its membership. New submissions are still welcome.

For OWN NSW the next twelve months promise to be a time of expansion and development. OWN Wellness successfully applied for funding from the Federal Office for Women to develop a program to build Leadership and Wellness initiatives for older women throughout NSW.

Similarly Our Prevention of Violence Against Older Women (PVAOW) working group achieved success with their application to the NSW Office for Women to investigate and catalogue the existing resources available on violence prevention for older women. OWN and Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL) are working with the Sydney International Women's Day (SIWD) Collective to build participation in next years IWD event. We have already booked our banner poles for 2009, and secured support for sponsorship once again from the City of Sydney. Some new banner sites mean we can offer the opportunity to women who missed out last time, to sponsor a banner. These banners will be returned to you in a couple of years after they are no longer able to be used.

It would be wonderful if our OWN NSW groups considered bringing in teams to march and participate in the days activities. Last year we were led by our Wollondilly Drummers, and it was spectacular! We'd also love other performance groups to add to the energy brought last year by our OWN NSW Theatre Group. If your group doesn't have a collective of performers, why not consider travelling in to Millers Point of a Tuesday to join this wonderful troupe? The OWN Theatre Group is calling for new members, and will welcome all comers regardless of experience – the only prerequisite is your enthusiasm! See the advert on page 7.

For those of you who would like to explore your other creative talents, opportunities just keep coming! Jan Wood has offered to launch her BATTLE AXE Television Production Unit, at 75 Windmill St, Millers Point. If you sign up for Jan's workshops you will be trained in all the essentials of video production. Jan would also like to encourage groups - performance and interest/activity groups - to call and register their interest for an interview. BATTLE AXE Television will record and promote their activities through this program on TVS community television. This will give us the opportunity to showcase all the network talents, whilst learning all the essential production skills. The first meeting of BATTLE AXE will be Friday 15 August 2008. 1.00 -3.00pm.

Maybe you want to develop your writing skills? Well Pearlle McNeil is taking registrations for a three day course in February 2009, to explore Life Writing. Places are strictly limited, so don't miss your chance!

Yes, 2008/2009 promises to be an exciting time for the network. Just remember you've got to be in it to begin it!

Beth Eldridge

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Who Are We?

The Older Women's Network (OWN) NSW is the peak body for 19 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 and 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.

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POINT of VIEW

What's in a Name?

I was so excited to be obtaining my very first passport, oh the joy. First, to the post office to obtain the necessary form, then the photos

The assistant in the post office looked at my papers as I explained that I was born Josephine Jackson, married and became Josephine Kelly, came to Australia in the name of Kelly became a citizen in the name of Kelly, then got divorced and reverted to my single name, had a driving license, voting card, bank account, and everything else in the name of Jackson, and had been a Jackson for eighteen years He told me I needed a birth certificate. I ordered a copy over the internet, cost \$58.

The certificate arrived after seven days, so back to the post office. The gentleman looked over my papers once more and decided to ring the passport office. They told him I needed to change my name at the Births, Deaths, Marriages and change of Name Department.

I fronted up to the aforementioned department, waited to be interviewed and was told I needed a copy of my marriage certificate. I ordered a copy over the internet, cost \$58.

I asked the gentleman in the suit would I need anything else for my application, he asked me if I had been married. I pointed out my Decree Nisi and said that I needed to be married in order to get divorced, he said that's fine. Just return here when your marriage certificate arrives with the sum of \$138 and we will give you your change of name certificate which will enable you to obtain a passport.

It will have taken three visits to the post office, two visits to that department where you change your name, it will have cost \$254 of my money to change my name from Jackson to Jackson!!!

Just before I left the man in the suit I asked him did he think my money would be going towards an overseas trip for a government minister, he did not laugh.

Josie Jackson

Put Dr Norman Swan
on the spot in you diary

The ABC's Health Report Doctor will be meeting
with OWN members on: 8/10/08.

Make sure your group will not miss out. Details to
follow.

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.*

Welcome to our new OWN NSW Management Team

Congratulations OWN on the successful conduct of our sixth Annual General Meeting. I heard it was a great event to be at and again regret the circumstances that kept me away. In the past seven years since the formation of OWN NSW I have been proud to have spent several of them as a member of the Management Team and appreciate the role it must play to uphold the rights, dignity and wellbeing of older women, and the Aims and Objectives as identified in our Constitution.

I look forward to reading full report of the conference, mean time I was happy to hear that 13 generous hearted women have accepted the role for the coming year '08-'09.

Recent years have seen some difficulties in meeting the required numbers needed to ensure best practice and to give support and leadership to nineteen groups. The public face of OWN must be represented to reflect our goals and the respect we have won as a peak body and as an affiliate of the national organization that is OWN Australia.

An impressive task indeed and every contribution will count.

The passage of 20 years since the founding in Sydney of the Older Women's Network has inevitably seen the moving on, and sadly in a number of instances the passing away, of some of the strong band of founders and the consequent gradual but significantly different band of women coming forward to carry on in the spirit of OWN.

I say different because we are all moulded by our life experiences and the experiences of older women perhaps

now just moving out of paid employment have certainly seen huge changes in some of the major issues confronting them as they enter the next era of life, euphemistically known as 'retirement'?

They will bring to OWN some new attitudes, different ways of working and certainly different ways of communicating. But of course many long-standing issues unfortunately remain.

Do we believe the feminist struggle for equal rights has been won?

Do we believe male chauvinism is a thing of the past?

Do we believe no women will again suffer domestic violence?

And do we believe that respect and dignity is accorded to older women tho' some may choose to think them no longer relevant?

And let's not at this stage mention global warming and the greatest threat to world economy since the great depression of the 1930's! The road is long the load is heavy but look what women and particularly we older women have achieved!

The baton continues to be handed on and I congratulate every woman who has picked up the baton of OWN. I wish you all well, and success in your endeavours, satisfaction, pleasure, enjoyment and fun as you go.

Barbara Burnham

Writing Course

With the loss of Muriel Horton, a superb and regular correspondent in our newsletter as you all know, we have lost a writer who had her finger on the pulse and was quick to let us all know what she felt passionate about, and with great verve and flair.

It is with Muriel in mind that I have decided to offer a three-day course in February 2009 (three consecutive Mondays 10.30am - 4pm) for 12 OWN women. The only cost will be \$5 each for photocopying. The numbers will be limited to 12 because of the space at Windmill Street, especially in the warm weather.

Whilst the focus of the course will be Life Writing, another aim would be to impart skills that would also apply to writing for the *OWN Matters*. In this way I hope that some of you might be encouraged by Muriel's example and help us carry on the tradition of writing regularly for the newsletter.

Pearlie McNeill

Our OWN Lives

Ageing in Place

I've achieved a Community Aged Care Package (CACP) at last. Only five months between assessment and delivery of the package. Someone called Paul will be here tomorrow to do my housework, laundry, odd jobs, some transport and cooking. Bliss! For an ancient and scarcely domesticated female it is indeed something to be thrilled about, particularly the cooking – to the extent of going about saying, "It's taken 87 years for me to get someone to do my cooking". And that word 'cooking' that sent an aged care functionary literally barking mad. Everything had gone swimmingly up to my signing of the agreement with a joking remark about hoping Paul's cooking would be good when the shouting and screaming began.

Helen: *I hope he's a good cook.*

Aged Care Functionary (ACF-my term): leaping to her feet, shouting: *What makes you think you are getting cooking done?*

Helen, lamely: *It's in the agreement.*

ACF: still shouting: *We don't do cooking.*

Helen, more lamely: *I'm a diabetic and need frequent small meals.*

ACF: screams: *In that case you need to be in a nursing home, high care —*

Helen thinking, as far as it is possible for her to think, I must smooth her feathers, I don't want to start badly with these people, says: *But how shall I manage? I can't live forever on frozen meals.*

ACF: still screaming: *You have TLC (Tender Loving Cuisine) in there, they're good.*

Helen: *Too expensive and they don't do vegetarian.*

ACF: deflating: *You're vegetarian, that's different. Something may be worked out —*

She takes her departure, remarking that the book on my book-stand should be the Bible.

I'm in shock but manage to telephone her manager leaving a message which was unanswered. Then collapsing on my bed I stay there till next day.

That dialogue took me one hour to type; typos and searching for the right words. A rest and a tango (on classic FM), I couldn't tango, or even sashay round the limited space in my flat, I'm barely shuffling. A jam sandwich, herbal tea and several squares of chocolate was lunch; unsuitable...

Next day I'm little better, barely coherent and extremely tired. I inherit some very decent curtains, mine are nearly a quarter of a century old. They need washing and are in a heap on the living room floor. The following day I'm coherent enough to know I must act, so consult Telstra's Age Page. Complaints refer me to TARS. I'm incoherent but someone listens (she has left her recording machine on; that is valuable later), and will sort it out with the care provider and ring back. Meanwhile I lie on my bed and am saved by the ABC, Radio National and classic FM, and a deep relaxation CD, given by a kindly psychologist at our hospital a few years ago. This all rescued me in the long months of recovery from that devastating attack of sciatica, which has brought to where I need this CACP. *To be continued in September issue*

Helen Monaghan

Mental Health Week 5-11 October 2008

Mental Health Week is part of a national mental health promotion campaign held in early October each year. Mental Health Week NSW (MHW) is funded by NSW Health. Its main aim is to promote social and emotional wellbeing to the population in this state – encouraging people to maximise their health potential, enhancing the coping capacity of communities, families, and individuals, and increasing mental health literacy.

MHW 2008 marks the first stage in the Mental Health Association's new, three year mental health promotion "Building Resilience" campaign.

This year, our focus is on "Appreciate the little things in life" – promoting the value of developing positive thinking and an optimism outlook on life through the appreciation of the little things in life. Focusing on the positives and dwelling less on the negatives is one way we can build our emotional resilience, reduce stress and enhance mental wellbeing.

Please go to our health campaigns website for a starter kit which provides ideas on how individuals and organisations can be involved and more information about free resources, merchandise and grants www.mentalhealth.asn.au/campaigns/index.htm

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Our OWN Issues

Ten Out of Ten

'We are all part of the ultimate statistic: Ten out of ten die.'

This means ten out of ten bodies need to be disposed of and either we, or our families decide how.

With world population increasing, the number of bodies is increasing and the land taken by dead ones harder to justify. Land has to be cleared for burial sites, trees cut down and various nasty chemicals used, to make coffins,

My parents' generation opted for cremation, either popping the urn in a wall or under a rose bush, or scattering the ashes. Cremations use a lot of fuel, and release green house gases. So neither traditional burial nor cremation are very enviro friendly, and people are looking for alternatives.

Just leaving your body to some anatomy department doesn't solve the problem of disposing of the body. Someone still has to do it.

I was listening to Peter Cundall on radio this morning and he is planning to be buried in a big compost heap, thus returning nutrients to the earth. Sounds a very appropriate end for such an enthusiastic gardener. But he probably owns a big enough piece of land to be allowed to do it.

I'm sure there would be difficulties having burials in backyard gardens. It might have 'grave' effects on the future selling price of the property. And what about those of us whose last dwelling place was a retirement village where the rate of 'dropping off the twig' is very high? Very disturbing to the shrubs!

One alternative was invented by Susanne Wigh-Masak. After death, the body is frozen in liquid nitrogen, which makes the body very brittle. The body is then vibrated and this turns the body into a powder. A vacuum chamber is used to evaporate any water so that the powder is dry. A sort of freeze drying! The powder is placed in a small corn or potato starch coffin and is buried to decompose in a short time. Whether this is available in Sydney, how much land space it takes up, and whether it returns nutrients to the earth, I have not yet found out.

When it comes to choosing coffins, there is an increasing range of eco friendly options, most of them made from recycled paper and cardboard, and therefore less damaging to the environment. You can even rent a fancy coffin cover and then be buried or cremated in the internal biodegradable coffin.

In the UK there are 228 natural burial sites owned by

councils and private businesses. One of these opened in Lismore this month. The deceased will be buried in biodegradable coffins between gum trees in a protected koala sanctuary. Families visiting graves would be lent a satellite navigation device. Byron Bay celebrant, Zenith Virago, welcomed Lismore's natural burial ground. "The body is full of nutrients," she said. "Being buried this way provides nutrient for soil and plants and animals."

This will be Australia's fourth 'natural burial site', all attached to crematoriums. There are existing sites in Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia. If overseas developments are any indication, more are expected in Australia.

So we will probably be able to choose:

dust to dust, ashes to ashes, nutrient to nutrient.

Lorraine Inglis

The Second Annual National Dementia Research Forum

will be held at the Wesley Conference Centre in Sydney 18-19 September 2008. This year, we have been able to engage four international speakers and the program will include a variety of sessions: plenaries, workshops, poster sessions, a hypothetical, a breakfast with the experts and a working lunch for emerging researchers.

A program, registration form and call for poster abstracts is available from our website <http://www.dementia.unsw.edu.au/DCRCweb.nsf/page/Forum>

If you'd like to know, what last year's delegates said about the Forum, please have a look at our October 2007 DCRC Newsletter at [http://www.dementia.unsw.edu.au/DCRCweb.nsf/resources/News2006/\\$file/Newsletter+-+Dementia+CRC+-+Issue+4.pdf](http://www.dementia.unsw.edu.au/DCRCweb.nsf/resources/News2006/$file/Newsletter+-+Dementia+CRC+-+Issue+4.pdf)

Germaine Greer talks "On Rage"

6.30 for 7pm, Friday 15 August,
NSW Teachers Federation
37 Reservoir Street, Surry Hills
\$15/\$12conc.

Bookings Gleebooks ph. 9660.2333
gleebooks.com.au/events

Tributes to Helen Murphy

A Daughter's Message

I have some deeply sad news to pass on about my beloved mother, Helen Murphy. I am heartbroken to have to tell you that she passed away at North Shore Private Hospital, after complications arising from open heart surgery. Our family is devastated by the loss of this most wonderful, warmhearted loving and giving human being whom we all adore. I hope you can pass on the news to those who should receive it.

I know how dedicatedly my mother offered herself to the performance group of OWN for many years, and that many people will be deeply saddened by this news.

Kind regards

Susan Murphy

Memories

It is with sadness that I reflect on the recent death of a long-time member of the Older Women's Network, Helen Murphy.

Helen was a very private person, so that I knew her only through the Theatre Group and her voluntary work. We first met in 1988 when the Theatre Group performed at Parliament House to make politicians aware that older women do exist and needed help with their problems. When asked to do a repeat performance the Group was in a fix because some of its members had been obliged to return to their jobs. Despite all sorts of rearrangements we were still one performer short, and that was when Helen saved the day. She stepped into the breach and, with no rehearsal, read the part and got us through. Not only that, she joined the Theatre Group on a permanent basis then and there and threw herself into its activities.

My memory of Helen dancing exuberantly to "How you gonna keep her down on the farm, Now that she's joined OWN" stays with me after all those years. The audiences loved seeing such energy, particularly as it was demolishing the 'passive and dependent' myth of ageing. At our 20th Birthday Celebration Helen agreed to take part so that we could present the original script of "Picnic at Parliament House" as part of the program, and she attended every rehearsal. Always willing to help, is how I remember Helen.

Always smartly dressed, Helen's rejoinder when I once complimented her on her good taste in clothes was to tell me that her boutique was the Op. Shop where she worked as a volunteer. She also worked as a volunteer reading to the blind on Community Radio, and she also read excerpts from *OWN Matters* for a CD to be sent to visually impaired Members.

Helen's contributions as a volunteer to help disabled people will be deeply missed. We extend to her family our sincere sympathy.

*Peggy Hewett, on behalf of
OWN NSW Management*

Tribute to Helen Murphy

I loved Helen, her warmth, her openness and longstanding dedication to the OWN Theatre Group and OWN generally—and her longstanding community work serving disadvantaged others. She had such a magnificent speaking voice, which helped the blind particularly but was the envy of so many others. It was her wonderful generous and open personality that made Helen a favourite of mine and so many others.

Noreen Hewett

Determination

I came to know Helen Murphy when I was looking for someone to help me make cassette recordings of OWN Matters for members who could no longer see well enough to read it.

Helen felt it was her duty to volunteer to serve people with disabilities.

Some years ago she was employed by Sydney Council, at one time as a social worker after she completed the Associate Diploma in Social Welfare at TAFE. Later she read news items at 2RPH (Radio for the Print Handicapped). She had a very strong deep voice and clear diction with—though I say it myself—a pronounced upper class, English accent. She did the monthly recordings for OWN, I made multiple copies and sent them to members who needed them. Eventually 2RPH refused to allow this extra use of their studios and so Helen and I cooperated monthly at my home using improvised recording facilities. She was so anxious and meticulous that the session was often an extended one because we had to repeat sections in an effort to arrive at perfection. Whenever my dog barked we had to rewind and do it all again!

Helen would always ring me the day before to remind me. 'Yes,' I would say, 'I know it's tomorrow. I always put it in my diary.' 'I just thought I would make sure,' Helen would reply. One day she said, 'I may be a bit late, I have broken my wrist.' Soon, however, she was at the door with her arm in a sling that had not prevented her keeping the appointment. Only a couple of months later she rang and announced, 'I can't come today. I have broken my arm.' 'Oh Helen, how did you do that?' 'Well, my husband's away cycling round China, and I wanted to

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open the top of the window, so I climbed on the table. It wasn't easy because I was still wearing the sling. And then I still wasn't high enough (for Helen was diminutive although determined), so I put a chair on the table. Then I over-balanced and fell off!!'

Helen was a very private person and did not share confidences easily. When I needed to find an 80 year old woman to complete the interviewing plan for a book, she reluctantly agreed to help me by participating. Most people love being interviewed and are willing to go on talking about ageing for hours. Not so Helen – after half-an-hour she stood up and said, 'Surely that's enough. I don't like talking about myself.' And she went home.

Margaret Sargent

Build on Your Knowledge of Hardware!

My name is Tanya Maiurano and I am the Activities Organiser at Bunnings Warehouse. I am currently planning our 4th annual Ladies DIY Night, which will be held on 13 August. This night is a chance for women to learn about hardware, without thinking that our store is purely a male domain. Additionally, as this night is dedicated to women in the community, we have asked other local organisations which could be beneficial for women who are attending to provide information about what they do, hand out pamphlets and speak individually to the women. I hope this could be a good opportunity for your organisation. Last year we had over 100 ladies attend the night. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions or enquiries, please contact me on the number provided

Tanya Maiurano 9873 8000

Theatre Group



Do You Like to Have Fun?



Do you sing in the shower? Do you sometimes dance to music on the radio? Do you remember the old songs (or maybe the tunes)? Do you like to hear people laugh? Do you love music? Do you enjoy singing around a piano?...

If you answer "yes" to any of the above questions, it's likely you are a **missing member** of the famous OWN Theatre Group!!!

Come along on a Tuesday and watch us rehearse at Mott Hall (*at the foot of Observatory Hill in the Rocks*).

No audition necessary. All your questions answered.

Even give you a cuppa tea.

First step to fun, please ring:

Jo Allon on: 9520 2854



Make a Difference

"Making It Happen, Making a Difference" is a series of Community Organising Forums open to anyone who is interested in grass roots social activism.

The project is part of Ultimo College's TAFE Outreach "Living in Harmony" program, which aims to bring community builders and organisers together to learn from each other's experiences. Ultimo College is working in partnership with the City of Sydney, Housing NSW and a number of non-Government Organisations to host the forums, and Councillor Robyn Kemmis is the patron.

Eva Cox will be the keynote speaker for the first forum, which will be held from 10.30am to 2.30pm on 13 August at the Cafe Church Hall at 37 St Johns Road Glebe, with lunch and afternoon tea provided. While participants will decide future topics and speakers, a number of organisations have agreed to share their expertise, including Concerned Older Women, the Community Housing Network and the Gathering Ground.

I encourage you to get involved so you can meet other active people in your neighbourhood and have a say in how your community should be run

Charmaine Jones, phone 0432 597 279 or 9217 5005 or emailcj66@bigpond.net.au.

Letters to the Editor

Changes and challenges

Now, 20 years on, change is happening for OWN just as I am sure many women like myself are facing changes and challenges as we move on to another stage in life.

When in early February I sat beside my husband in the Emergency Department of Gosford Hospital waiting for him to be admitted as a patient for the first time in 58 years of marriage, I remarked "Here we are, you 86 me 81, having a whole new experience".

Little did I dream what was ahead? Now, four months and three readmissions to hospital later, there have been many new experiences including Ken's transfer to a Nursing Home, which began not only my first ever experience of living alone, but learning to deal with red tape and seemingly endless legal and financial affairs.

But two months, on with the help and support of wonderful neighbours and friends, I am finding there is an upside to living alone; such as meals when I'm hungry, and TV to myself. I also have found I can deal with whatever comes along knowing that Ken is being well, even lovingly, cared for, which gives me peace of mind and confidence in the decision we made.

So much of that strength comes from the example of the wonderful OWN women I have known over the years. I was glad to hear that the Conference was a success, and feel sure there are women who will want to work together with other OWN members in facing all the challenges ahead.

Nancy Brown

I'm Not a Whinger but ...

It has taken me some time to get around to organising an e-tag, and even though I have got this far, my irritation and sense of grievance has not abated one iota. I still find it hard to believe that we now have a transport system (in NSW and beyond) with an accepted (or so it seems) practice of discrimination built in as a working feature.

Such has been the intensity of my feelings that I have for several months gone out of my way to avoid tunnels and freeways rather than be part of this unacceptable system. But now I face the prospect of having the hated e-tag or paying \$10 for each occasion I cross the harbour bridge without one.

Recently, waiting on George Street for a bus, I advised a young Asian man that, yes, he could catch a Millers Point bus and get off further down George to get to Circular Quay. But when the man got on behind me and went to pay his fare, the driver insisted the bus would not go anywhere near the Quay. Before I could intervene, the driver began shouting and then ordered the man off the bus. Ashamed to see this man treated so shabbily I shouted myself then, pointing out to this unpleasant driver what a racist he was. To my astonishment, he promptly changed the route indicator and then pulled up outside the QVB and told everyone on board to get off, NOW!!!

It was when I complained the next day on the 131500 number that I learned we can no longer actually complain about such outrageous behaviour we can only *give feedback*.

How far does this discrimination go? What sort of a transport system,

public or otherwise, have we created? And why do I feel so powerless and disenfranchised?

Pearlie McNeill
OWN UP

Disappointed

As an avid reader of our OWN Newsletter each month since joining in 1991, I always took pride in distributing to and encouraging other women to read, enjoy and be impressed.

Last month I was eagerly anticipating a wider readership since OWN Sutherland merged with the Wellness Centre BUT I must confess to feeling ashamed and disappointed when I opened July 2008's edition. I am sorry Beth but as a practising Catholic I felt as if, in your opinion, I have to choose feminism or my faith. Sure hell will freeze over before I, for one, do that. Can't we as Older Women be happy that the YOUTH of two generations below some of us are encouraged to believe in justice, peace and care for each other. Strange, but I always felt that OWN women also supported the philosophy of justice, peace and care for one another. Maybe our next step is to "put our CBD into suspended animation" by expressing our admiration for the organisation that managed to make our Sydney a place of happiness and smiles for a whole week. Even the media found more 'positives' than the norm. I am sorry Beth, that you were not able to access the City to feel the warm atmosphere many of us enjoyed.

Pat Donaghy, Sutherland

Letters to the Editor

Catholic Women

When I read the front page of the July issue of *OWN Matters* written by Beth Eldridge, my angst was not focussed on opportunism by politicians and others who seek financial gain from World Youth Day, as they've done with other world events. Instead I've been filled with images of just a few of many actions I've taken with Catholic women.

They've accepted my radicalism as I did their faith as we fought injustices together. They were in the first attempts to revive International Women's Day in the 40s. They helped create the Save Our Sons Movement opposing conscription of 20- year-olds and the Vietnam war. We endured violence and helped draft resisters as SOS spread across Australia.

I remember two women from the Sisters of Mercy order joining a sit-down in an airless corridor outside John Howard's office. We said we'd stay until he heard two East Timorese women's plea for arms for their countrymen to resist the invasion. A 92-year-old was given a chair, the rest of us sat on the floor and sweated. Eventually three of us, including one of the Sisters, joined the East Timorese women to support their case in the PM's office. When it was clear we wouldn't leave without a result, Canberra relayed the PM's undertaking that he would keep in touch with the Timorese women daily on ways to provide assistance.

On a separate occasion the Sisters of Mercy Order awarded OWN theatre group \$1000 in acknowledgement of the value of their work.

I remember Vianney Hatton visiting OWN office to offer the results of her

scholarship-funded research into Wellness in the United States, and her generosity always in support of OWN and its projects centrally and in the Sutherland Shire.

I think of a friend I still write to – when she moved to a different locality she used to suss out church, then confront the priest's views and move on if they weren't progressive enough. (Something like a local friend's activism in the Anglican movement for the ordination of women.) My Catholic friend and another woman invited locals in a conservative country town to join them in a peace rally over the Iraq war. Over 100 turned up to join their protest.

I think of many Catholic women who have joined or supported OWN. I love their commitment to expanding OWN's influence in the Sutherland Shire and cannot support angry rhetoric that could alienate them from OWN - particularly when, in prime front page position, it can appear to be official policy of NSW OWN.

Noreen Hewett, Sutherland

To the Editors of OWN MATTERS

Friday was a busy day. We left home before 9 am to take out two Vietnamese sisters to their venue for World Youth Day. The (mostly older) women volunteers were dealing with graciousness and patience with the wave upon wave of young people from many nations who were arriving all day. I arrived home about 4pm, made a cup of tea and sat down to read the OWN Newsletter which I had just collected.

What a "punch in the guts"! Goodness, is this coming from OWN? If this is the tone of this issue I won't be reading any more. And I haven't.

Why such a reaction? Not because I don't share many of the concerns voiced in the editorial. Not because I don't think we need to ask these questions. But because it is unworthy of OWN. Not a single positive entry. Not a word of support. Not a mention of women!

Would OWN write an editorial like that about our Jewish sisters, our Gay and Lesbian brothers and sisters, our pensioners, our disabled?? Did the editors speak to any Catholic WOMEN about WYD? Did they consider anything about the feisty, even heroic Catholic women who are working within their own communion to right the wrongs and promote the human rights of all? Did the editors seek the opinions of any of the Catholic women who have given time and energy to the causes of OWN? Or were the editors seduced by the media and the opinions of the authoritarian male leadership?

Have we grown so old that we cannot stretch our imaginations to consider that for young people this could be a moment of excitement, adventure, of insight and direction for a future of service to our broken and needy world? Could this be something we might support for our granddaughters and great granddaughters?

For many years I have supported OWN because I espouse OWN's values and I admire the generosity and vision of the women who began this organisation. The OWN I know has a BIG HEART. Please do not shrink and shrivel it by returning to the prejudices and bigotries our parents and grandparents worked so hard to transcend.

I want to read an OWN Newsletter that is compassionate and

Letters to the Editor

encouraging to women, that is life-enhancing, life-giving.

Indeed, OWN Matters, but only because ALL WOMEN (and men) MATTER.

Nevertheless, I wish you well in all you do and success for all the enterprises sponsored by OWN.

Vianney Hatton, Sutherland

Angry and Sad

I write as a proud Catholic and a proud member of OWN, and I was angry, sad and disappointed to read your editorial in July magazine. I have always found OWN to be fair, honest and strong in all ways - never bitter or judgemental. However - I QUESTION SOME OF YOUR COMMENTS :

“the taxes paid by the so called denominated and faithless for this Pilgrims privilege”. *

(this is a misquote- ed)*

Do not the so called Faithful pay taxes as well? A popular song tells us WE ARE ONE BUT WE ARE MANY - are we being fragmented into faithless and faithful groups?

\$41 million paid in compensation to the Australian Jockey Club - does the AJC still enjoy the privilege of a PEPPERCORN rent for this vast area of prime real estate at Randwick?

I do not know of any public schools used for sleeping arrangements for the Pilgrims from overseas - if I am in error I thank them for their generosity.

On a lighter note - A public primary school in the Fairfield area held a pretend WYD, with, I believe, wonderful success - congratulations.

A Girls School of the Muslim Faith played host to Pilgrims from the USA.

Congratulations, this is great social progress. - WE ARE ONE BUT WE ARE MANY. - Maybe some future OWN members here?

I roamed the (my) city and was welcomed by strangers as never before. I danced and chanted in Pitt Street Mall with young people all happy and smiling.

I am now not only a proud Catholic and a proud member of OWN but I also own a WYD backpack thanks to a very kind niece.

I pray for the continuation of the Older Women's Network and let us not forget that at OWN:

WE ARE MANY BUT WE ARE ONE.

With regards,

June Smith, Sutherland

It's Up To You

The mass reaction from Sutherland OWN members just emphasizes to me that this is indeed a *reaction*, rather than an analysis of what I actually wrote.

At no stage have I questioned anybody's choice of faith. We all have a right to our own system of belief, and to have that respected. This reaction from Sutherland members appears inspired by a need to defend the Catholic faith. It was never under attack.

My article is questioning the rationale of our government to commit to this sort of spending, and the precedent that it sets for other groups.

My analysis in that regard was not

an extraordinary event - my editorials in OWN Matters frequently call into question decisions of government, or criticize their choice of priorities. They are after all supposed to govern responsibly for all people.

All women are welcome to write and present their views - that is the basis of this newsletter. It's also the reason for our disclaimer, published every issue.

It is the responsibility of all members to write and express their joys and disappointments. It's just not realistic to argue that others should have written about an issue from your perspective, only you can do that.

Beth Eldridge

OWN NSW Congrats

The OWN Sydney Working Committee congratulates the Management Committee for a very successful and significant NWS Conference, June 29 – July 1, 2008. Delegates enjoyed a well run, informative and enjoyable event. Undoubtedly we now have many insights and much information to convey to our various groups and committees.

We believe that the keynote speaker, Milly Ingram, was an excellent choice both for the content of her talk and her engagement with delegates. The program for the two days was varied and catered for the interests of most delegates. The venue is a very pleasant one and the catering ensured that bodies as well as minds were tended.

*With best wishes
Marjorie O'Loughlin
Joan Modder*

Things That Go Chir-r-p In The Night

I first heard the noise at 3 am but could not see anything untoward so tried to settle down and get to sleep. Upon rising I heard a louder version of the 3 am sound. Still no sign of an intruder! I continued to hear the noises in various spots from the bedroom, up the hallway, stopping at the lounge room entry. I was sure that it was a cricket, or a family of crickets, as the sounds were different in different spots. The assault on my sleep continued for a week. It seemed to happen while I was watching TV in the evening, behind me as I went into the bathroom, and sometimes *felt* as if I was standing on them and they were objecting.

I decided to ask my neighbours whether they were hearing similar noises. The responses ranged from strange looks as though my age was showing to, "It's your smoke alarm!" When I prevailed on my young neighbour to check the smoke alarm, he took it down, pressed it, said it was O.K. and put it back up.

Was that the end of the noises? No! Into the second week, and getting desperate, I rang a pest controller.

"What insect is the problem?"

"I don't know!" was my stern reply.

"Well, if you don't know and you can't see anything, I'm afraid I can't help you."

What to do? I decided to try to tape the noise to show I wasn't really going round the twist. That exercise drove me balmy, switching the tape on, missing a single chirp, leaving the tape on, playing it back and listening ad infinitum... a bit like watching paint dry.

Then people began hearing it when they phoned me, including my friend Lucy.

"That was what my smoke alarm

sounded like when the battery was running down, in all the rooms in the house," she said.

So I gingerly climbed up the ladder, took down the alarm and left it down and peace was restored. Hallelujah! At least it proved I had been hearing noises. When I replaced the battery it behaved itself.

So, be aware of things that go Chir-r-p in the night.

Peg Hewett

Aqua Aerobics

Nearly ten o'clock,
Over twenty ladies in the pool,
Warming up, in wait for
The aqua aerobics session to start.
One facilitator on Tuesday,
A different one on Wednesdays,
Both equally athletic, equally efficient.

Soft music in the background,
Off we go, eager to exercise
Limbs and muscles,
Back, abdomen and spine,
Neck, eyes and joints;
Balance and breathing activities;
Side-walking, pedalling, cycling,
floating,
Ending with stretches and relaxation.

The warm pool water,
Mostly pleasant and inviting,
Loosens knees, elbows, ankles, hips;
Loosens all joints,
Improving flexibility.
"Young at heart" mature ladies,
Of different shapes and sizes,
In costumes of varied colours,
Slowly or quickly moving,
Smiling, laughing, humming, singing;
Cause ripples and waves
Over the water surface.
A word here, a joke there,
Create a joyful atmosphere.

Arrive a late-comer:

Striped black and white suit,
Short, quick, and light steps,
Bright shiny eyes;
A large grin, "I'm here" shouts she,
her usual greeting.
Spontaneous laughs are heard,
Livening even more, the active group.

Time for the colourful "noodles",
Equipment popular all round.
More actions:
Up and down the pool we merrily go;
Legs and arms at work:
Again, cycling, pedalling,
Forward and backwards,
Everyone at one's own pace.
An hour quickly elapses,
Duration of our session.
A ball game:
More excitement and laughter;
A few stretches,
Then out the pool
For the sauna or the shower.

Hydro exercises, twice weekly,
Therapeutic, relieving, annihilating,
stress,
Improve our movements,
Our posture, our well-being;
Gradually transforming us,
Into smiling, happy athletes,
Fit, and perhaps ready one day,
In the near future,
To confidently participate
In a "Mature Ladies' contest",
To be champions.
Who knows!!!

Acknowledgement
To you, numerous volunteers,
Who donate your time
Organizing these events,
Our sincere gratitude.
Appreciative we are,
Of your generosity.

From my very tender years,
I've heard, and strongly believe,
That good deeds,
Are often rewarded tenfold.
Let it be for you!
Thank you!

Marie Claude Marie

Ghost words

“What does c.c. at the end of a letter mean?” I heard a radio listener ask. An interesting question – a carbon copy of a document is a thing of the past since computers came into our lives, but we still sometimes see ‘cc Joe Smith’ to indicate that Joe is to receive a copy of that document. Clearly the writer is still living in a past age where messy carbon paper was used to copy all typed documents.

Not long afterwards, a friend mentioned that her elderly brother had been a telegraphist and I realised it was a word I hadn’t heard in a long, long time. Faxes and emails have long put paid to telegraphy as a career (indeed, when did you last receive a telegram?), just as copying machines spelled the end of copy typists and calculators eliminated comptometer operators. You never hear of these vocations now.

I even remember a time when department stores not only had a chair at each counter, but they had alteration hands to adjust the fit of a dress you wanted to buy. Their badge of office was a pin-studded pincushion strapped to the wrist. The altered garment was ready the next day. These stores also sold corsets and garters, which wouldn’t be in high demand these days, and we went to their rest rooms to “spend a penny” (what a victory for women’s lib. that we are no longer charged for this amenity!).

There are still a few blacksmiths, saddlers and chimney sweeps around, but I doubt today’s young men see these occupations as career opportunities; the milkman and iceman have long since disappeared into history. And when some future historian refers to Bill Hayden’s famous remark in 1983 that a drover’s dog could have led Labor to victory in the election, will someone ask “What’s a drover?”

Helen Young

Doug and Joan are off North again in their Campervan

We parked our campervan in a quiet spot beside a flowering wattle tree, we two old grey nomads; a beaut spot for sunset watching, walking, reading and snoozing.

We have to be careful with water so we shower every second day. It was the day to wash in a small basin. There is very little space in the camper to move, so I put one hand on the sink, one on the stove and my foot in the basin of water. I reached down to wash it and wobbled dangerously. I tried lifting my foot up, the basin came too, I tried again. No go. Waving my foot about in the air I thought of the funny side – it was like a Marx Bros. film! I needed to sit down, so dragging the basin across the floor I maneuvered myself to the doorway, sat down and put my feet on the running board.

Then, a strange thing happened, a flock of tiny double barred finches swept into the wattle tree making it some alive with their fluttering, hopping and chirping.

They are inquisitive birds and attracted to water. A small group flew towards me, then swooped back to the tree. Again and again they came, getting closer each time, and then fluttered back. Finally they reached the awning of our camper, perched there and peeped down at me, the two tiny bars on their white chests appearing and disappearing as they hopped about, chirping loudly. One flew out and hovered in the air. Will it come down? I sat there, my foot stuck in a basin, enchanted.

Just as swiftly as they came, they suddenly took off, gathered together above me and disappeared.

Ironically Doug had been off bird watching.

Joan Johns

A Book about a River

It seems timely just now to talk about a not very good, but lengthy, romantic novel set in the last and first years of the 19th and 20th centuries, against the background of the Murray/ Darling River systems. “All the Rivers Run” by Nancy Cato was first published in 1978. The copy I have is from the local library in a large print edition in two volumes running to about 1000 pages. I have only read the first volume of 750 pages; but that is enough to give a good picture of how the rivers were then, and the warnings at that time about the degradation we see today. Then the paddle steamers were going as far as Wilcannia, whale-boats were plying from the Murrumbidgee and the river was flowing down to the sea in good seasons. However, in bad seasons the river would be merely a chain of mud flats in which the steamers could be stuck for months. Now we have learnt that by the time the Murray reaches the sea the land is degraded almost beyond redemption, Lake Alexandrina is dry and the river seems to be dying. We are warned that unless there is good rain on the catchments by October the situation will be perilous.

This day I have only time to transcribe a paragraph or two telling of how it was then.

At Tilpa below Wilcannia:

“On all sides were the same flat, barren surroundings, the grey surroundings alternating with the red sand, the same shimmering mirage in that indigo distance, dry roly-poly and steel blue trees in the foreground. The primary colours of red, blue and yellow, bleached and softened by the heat. Were her muted to the ghost of themselves—

There are descriptions of the lagoons at Mildura ‘a mile wide’, of great ‘freshes’ from the Ovens and the traditional rivalry between the states through which it passes.

This book, though too much is devoted to the ‘romance’, is well worth a read—

Helen Monaghan

Aboriginal Support Circle Issues

NT Intervention

As members of the Older Women's Network (NSW) we call upon the Federal Government to implement the following in relation to the Northern Territory Intervention (as set out in the *Northern Territory National emergency Response Act 2007*)

1. Target those issues, which together create environments of neglect in which sexual, physical and psychological abuse can flourish. To this end we recommend the development of:

- * a comprehensive program of employment creation,
- * targeted delivery of a wide variety of health services, including training
- * significant improvements in housing provision, in consultation with communities
- * a major focus on educational reform and expansion.
- * a sustained police presence

2. Review the operation of the income management scheme so that it does not discriminate against groups and individuals who demonstrably, are not at risk.

3. In reinstating the CDEP program ensure that such income cannot be used solely or even primarily to purchase alcohol and /or drugs by implementing case management of identified groups.

4. In consultation with communities, periodically examine the operation and effectiveness of the alcohol management scheme under the intervention legislation. Specifically, review the success or otherwise of the policy of designating areas as 'dry' and critically assess the usefulness of this policy for the future.

5. Reinstatement of protections against racial discrimination in the operation of the NT intervention legislation and more broadly reinstatement of protections against discrimination in the Northern Territory. Such protections as contained in the Commonwealth (*Racial Discrimination Act*) and the Northern Territory (*Anti-Discrimination Act*) should be restored to their previous active status.

6. Ensure the effective participation of Indigenous peoples in all aspects of the intervention - developing Community Partnership links wherever feasible.

7. Remove the provisions declaring that legislation constitutes a 'special measure', and simultaneously set a timetable for the transition from the emergency phase of the intervention to a viable community development plan.

8. Ensure that proper legal procedures are followed in all dealings involving indigenous property.

Aboriginal Employment Strategy Expanding

A few years ago I reported that an Aboriginal employment agency had been established in Moree, which was having success in placing young Indigenous people in jobs in the cotton industry, shops, banks etc. It soon expanded to nearby places such as Tamworth.

Now the Aboriginal Employment Strategy (AES) is the largest specialist Indigenous employment agency in NSW (I'm not sure about the rest of Australia). Responding to a growing demand for skilled Aboriginal employees to fill a range of customer service and graduate positions, it is expanding its corporate recruitment division and has formed strong partnerships with



Aboriginal Support Circle Issues

financial institutions such as the ANZ, NAB, Westpac and the Commonwealth Bank as well as local government. The companies the AES forms partnerships with have broad corporate goals that include reconciliation and addressing Indigenous disadvantage.

Two new staff have been appointed to the Talent Management division, which identifies skilled Aboriginal people and places them on a stable career path in corporate organisations. Currently a recruitment drive is being undertaken to fill a number of places in metropolitan and regional NSW.

Pat Zinn

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES' STRAIT ISLANDER WRITERS' FESTIVAL

SATURDAY 6 SEPTEMBER 2008, AT THE NSW WRITERS' CENTRE, Situated in the grounds of Callan Park [old Rozelle Hospital] off Balmain Road, Rozelle.

There will be a café all day, unlimited free parking, music, poetry and art.

The program begins at 10.15 am and goes through to 6.30 pm. Visitors will hear well-known Aboriginal authors speak on their craft, Aboriginal poetry readings, the influence of life stories on Aboriginal writing, the significance of passing on of traditions, the inside story of what it means to be an Aboriginal woman today and entertainment through word and music.

CONTACT DETAILS FOR MORE INFORMATION

phone: [02] 9555 9757

email: nswwc@nswwriterscentre.org.au

web: www.nswwriterscentre.org.au

TO REGISTER:

www.nswwriterscentre.org.au

Mr Tom Calma

Tom Calma is an Aboriginal elder from the Kungarakan tribal group and a member of the Iwaidga tribal group whose traditional lands are south west of Darwin and on the Coburg Peninsula in Northern Territory, respectively. He has been involved in Indigenous affairs at a local, community, state, national and international level and worked in the public sector for over thirty years.

He has broad experience in public administration, particularly in Indigenous education programs and in developing employment and training programs for Indigenous people.

In the early 1980s, Tom Calma and Indigenous colleagues established the Aboriginal Task Force (ATF) at the Darwin Technology College, which provided second chance education for Indigenous people. He became a senior lecturer and head of ATF for six years.

From 1995-2002, he worked as a senior diplomat in India and Vietnam, representing Australia's interests in education and training. In 2003 he was Senior Advisor Indigenous Affairs to the Minister of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs. He worked with remote Indigenous communities to implement community-based and driven empowerment and participation programs.

On July 12, 2004 Tom Calma was appointed as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commissioner for five years. He has also been appointed as acting race commissioner, annually, since July, 2004.

Commissioner Calma is a White Ribbon Day Ambassador. He is also a national patron of Wakakirri National Story Festival.

The Close the Gap Campaign began with a challenge from Tom Calma to the federal and state governments, in one of his annual reports. In his report released this year, he was very concerned that the Intervention be reviewed and changed to maximise

Aboriginal Support Circle Issues

protection of children and families while respecting human rights and ensuring effective participation of the communities.

Lorraine Inglis

Response to government to the National Apology to the Stolen Generations

By Tom Calma, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commissioner

Today is an historic day.

It's the day our leaders - across the political spectrum - have chosen dignity, hope and respect as the guiding principles for the relationship with our first nation's peoples.

Through one direct act, Parliament has acknowledged the existence and the impacts of the past policies and practices of forcibly removing Indigenous children from their families. And by doing so has paid respect to the Stolen Generations. For their suffering and their loss. For their resilience. And ultimately for their dignity. And to all Parliamentarians, I say let today be a new beginning, not an end point.

Last month, I facilitated discussions between the government and Stolen Generations about the apology. The overwhelming message from those meetings was that this should be seen as the first step in a partnership.

The Stolen Generations have needs that have yet to be met, mainly due to under-funding of Link Ups and other support organizations. There remains a pressing need for specific assistance tailored to the particular circumstances of those forcibly removed from their families.

The consultations between your government and Stolen Generations identified a number of elements to build upon from today. These include:

- ★ committing to a partnership with Stolen Generations groups, as well as Link Ups and other service providers,

with ongoing consultation and participation.

- ★ committing to a comprehensive government response to
- ★ the needs of the Stolen Generations, as identified in the
- ★ Bringing Them Home report.
- ★ adopting a whole of government approach - across departments - to achieve this.

There is much hope that today's apology can create the impetus for a renewed partnership between the federal government and state and territory governments to fully implement the recommendations of the Bringing Them Home report. It is timely that the federal government take a leadership role in developing a national process to make this happen.

Finally, can I acknowledge the support of the many millions of non-Indigenous Australians who have walked with us on the path of reconciliation and justice, and can I pay tribute to the members of the Stolen Generations, for your incredible resilience, stoicism and dignity in the face of untold suffering.

Let your healing and the healing of the nation begin. Thank you.

Tom Calma

MOSMAN RECONCILIATION

Come and meet
TOM CALMA

Join members of MOSMAN RECONCILIATION to discuss major issues facing Indigenous people
Remote communities, health, education, housing

Friday 22 August

MOSMAN ART GALLERY & COMMUNITY CENTRE
Corner Art Gallery Way & Myahgah Road,
Mosman

6.30pm for 7.00pm

Nibbles & Refreshments

Contact:

Dorothy(dbfuller@bigpond.com) 9968-3910

Frennie(frennie@tpg.com.au) 9909-0203



OWN Advocacy

The Shape of Public Housing Shelter NSW Conference June 26th 2000

Mike Allen, Director-General, Housing NSW, spoke on “The Transition of the public housing system to a social housing system”. Public housing was for the working poor, the change to social housing means that housing is for people most in need. There are more high needs people and less housing money, so the focus is on housing those most in need, and sustainability. Housing NSW (formerly the Housing Department) policy has changed a lot, there are now fixed term leases instead of housing for life, changes to rent policies and charges for water.

Only the most vulnerable and disadvantaged can be housed, such as the frail, aged and the disabled. The focus of care now is on keeping people in their homes rather than institutionalised care, and to provide combined care in village style communities. Government and non-government housing and support providers are working in partnership to provide stable housing with support services for social housing tenants with complex needs.

Most social housing tenants now are on social security payments, there is less rent collected and less overall funding. Therefore, Housing NSW is limited in whom they can house but hope to provide affordable housing to workers, by councils working together with developers, while they concentrate on providing housing in a combined care setting to “key client groups”. One of them being poor, single, elderly people who are presently low paid workers paying rent with no prospects of buying housing and little, if any, savings.

Key workers such as cleaners, sandwich-hands, transport workers, checkout staff – the working poor who were once eligible for public housing now pay a lot of rent in the private rental market and cannot afford to save. So Housing NSW is preparing now for the poor single aging population that is on the increase.

Places for special needs groups such as the elderly are being made available now. And the application process is being streamlined so that only a single application for housing needs to be made.

The Director General said: “Our *New Directions in social Housing for Older People* strategy aims to provide more responsive and flexible housing that can meet the needs of older people well into the future. The strategy includes – an investment of \$420 million dollars over five years for an additional 2,800 homes for older people living



in social housing, and another \$75 million for refurbishing and modifying existing social housing:

- the development of dedicated older persons’ precincts in major social housing developments, to help older people strengthen social networks and access support; and
- improved partnerships and service delivery arrangements between Housing NSW and other human service agencies and non-government organisations to help older people living in social housing.

The NSW Government has also recently committed funding for the *Housing NSW Tenant Connect program*, as part of its *Ageing Well in NSW* package. Under this program, the Australian Red Cross will deliver a daily telephone monitoring service to isolated frail older people living in social housing.

There is information about this phone service on the Red Cross website called Housing NSW Tenant Connect: People who live alone and are over 80, and Aboriginal people who are over 55 and not in daily contact with someone, are eligible.

If you do not have a landline, the Red Cross can arrange for a free one for you. Call them to arrange a visit and sign you up for the daily phone call service - translators are available on request. The general Red Cross free call number 1800 812 028 will transfer your call to this service.

Housing NSW is trialling ‘Universal Housing’, housing that is adaptable to meet changing needs throughout people’s lives. Currently single people in need are sometimes given 2 or even 3 bedroom homes as there are a lot of these and less demand.

The Director-General said the Rocks housing estate is not going to be sold and that it was a shortsighted plan that did not address the complex problems social housing is facing.

Current public housing renewal projects include Bonnyrigg, One Minto and the Glebe Redevelopment Project.

Speeches made at the conference are available on the Shelter NSW website.

Heather Jennings

OWN Advocacy

Workshop on citizen and consumer engagement in national health reform

On Thursday 21 June 2007 I attended the above workshop on behalf of the Older Women's Network.

It was the second such workshop run by The Australian Health Care Reform Alliance (AHCRA). Further workshops will be conducted in various locations and the results will be collated and presented at the health Reform Summit in Canberra on the 30/31 of July. The Summit aims to influence health policy debates in the lead up to the Federal election later this year. Information about the Summit can be found at www.healthreform.org.au.

The workshop took the form of a questionnaire which began with asking individual satisfaction with health care treatment over the past 12 months. Questions related to what improvements could be made etc. The questions were accompanied by discussion with the group. The final questions related to what we saw as a good Health Care system in any country, be it here or overseas.

The outcomes from this group included:

- Health care affordable to all
- Greater transparency relating to the allocation of funds to health care
- More GP's and specialists for regional and country areas (including Indigenous communities)
- Free dental care included in Medicare
- More immediate availability of health care at home after hospitalization.
- Improved Mental Health care

This was a very important workshop and I strongly recommend that a representative from OWN attend the Summit at the end of July

Older People Speak Out

Older People Speak Out (OPSO) is an all-volunteer, independent, free-spirited group with the experience, knowledge and qualifications to consult with older people to ascertain their concerns and then to speak out on those issues without fear or favour. You can find out more about our activities from our website www.opsos.com.au. We work closely with OWN in Brisbane.

One of our concerns is the attitude of some in the media to older people and their issues, and so we instituted annual awards to reward the media when they get it right. Entry forms for the 2008 awards can be obtained by contacting opos@volqld.org.au or by ringing 07 33152523

Tony Townsend, OPSO

Mature Workers Mean Business

Elizabeth Broderick, Federal Commissioner responsible for Age Discrimination, launched a new community education campaign on 9 July aimed at busting the myths and stereotypes about mature age workers.

Targeted specifically at employers, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) campaign 'Mature workers mean business' will use a range of print advertisements and web-based material to highlight the benefits of mature age workers and to address discrimination in this area.

Commissioner Broderick said in her recent national 'Listening Tour' many older participants raised age discrimination as a barrier to full and equal participation in the workplace and many other aspects of life.

"Some people told me that ageist assumptions and attitudes heavily impacted on their ability to find meaningful work, including misconceptions about being able to adapt to change, or wanting work at senior levels," said Ms Broderick. "Others recounted the barriers they faced in other areas of life, such as accessing public spaces or being awarded driver's licenses."

In 2006/07 HREOC received 106 complaints under the Age Discrimination Act (2004):

- * 66% of these complaints were made by people over 45;
- * 78% of these complaints related to employment;
- * 19% of complaints related to the provision of goods, services and facilities.

"As we live and work for longer, it is crucial that older Australians of all ages are able to fully participate in society. There is also a strong business imperative for employers to attract and retain mature age workers," Commissioner Broderick said.

"The issue of age discrimination is perhaps one of the most significant social policy issues facing current and future generations and will be a very important aspect of my work during my five-year term as Commissioner."

The new website resources provide a number of case studies and information available at: www.humanrights.gov.au/matureworkers/

Anne Barber

At and Beyond the Rocks

Sydney OWN

OWN Sydney has congratulated the organizers of the NSW State conference for a very successful two day event. We were particularly enthused with the contribution given by Millie Ingram, Chair Wyanga Aboriginal Elders Group, Redfern, and the following discussion which she so ably led. The OWN submission which has since been prepared by five members appears elsewhere in this newsletter. Noted are the seven Sydney members who were elected to the NSW Management Team.

Sydney's own Annual General Meeting will be held Friday August 22 to which all members are invited to attend and - not to be missed - is guest speaker Elizabeth Broderick NSW Sex Discrimination Commissioner and Commissioner responsible for Age Discrimination, Elizabeth was a partner at one of Australia's leading law firms, Blake Dawson and developed the firm's business case for flexibility in the workplace.

Her efforts contributed to creating a workplace where more than 20 percent of the law firm's workforce now uses flexible work arrangements.

She established the first Legal Technology Group within a law firm in Australia and is widely recognised as a leader in the delivery of online legal services to educate individuals about the law.

More recently she has travelled the length and breadth of Australia listening to women and men's concerns about gender equality and age

Joy Ross

Elizabeth Broderick

Elizabeth Broderick is a lawyer, mentor and innovative leader, 2001/02 Telstra NSW Business Woman of the Year and Australian Corporate Business Woman of the Year.



Prior to her appointment as Sex Discrimination Commissioner and the Commissioner responsible for Age Discrimination, Elizabeth was a partner at one of Australia's leading law firms, Blake Dawson and developed the firm's business case for flexibility in the workplace.

Her efforts contributed to creating a workplace where more than 20 percent of the law firm's workforce now uses flexible work arrangements.

She established the first Legal Technology Group within a law firm in Australia and is widely recognised as a leader in the delivery of online legal services to educate individuals about the law.

More recently she has travelled the length and breadth of Australia listening to women and men's concerns about gender equality and age

discrimination. In 2008, she was part of Australia's delegation to the United Nations for the Commission on the status of women.

Elizabeth developed mentoring programs for teenage girls at State High Schools in Sydney as well as a mentoring program for female university students.

She has a particular interest in issues related to gender equality, women in business, work and life balance and corporate social responsibility. She is a regular speaker at international and domestic conferences.

Elizabeth is married and has two young children.

MILLERS POINT COMMUNITY FESTIVAL

Sydney OWN is having a Community Information Stall at the festival on Saturday September 6th, - we will have Pamphlets and other information about OWN. The stall is to support the local community of Millers Point, where OWN has had an office since 1991; and part of a membership drive. If you can please come along and support our stall, you might like to talk to prospective new members or people who are just interested in OWN and what it does. Or just come along and join in the festival, about which there is information on their website: Millers Point Community Festival.

Heather Jennings

At and Beyond the Rocks

Coming!...Coming!...Coming!
Dr Norman Swan of ABC's "Health Report" will be coming to talk with OWN members on **October 8/10/08**. Put the date in your diary. Details to follow.

SUPPORT GROUP

The support group meets 10.30 – 12.00 on alternate Thursdays at Windmill Street, Millers Point. The first meeting was used as a planning meeting, the next two for discussion, primarily around issues of aging and loss. The first two meetings were attended by two OWN members, the third by only one. Those who attended were very positive about the need and usefulness of such a group.

Numbers are small at the moment, although this is to be expected for such a group in the beginning. I have met with the Chatswood Wellness group and was encouraged by the response. However, it appears that the Chatswood members would prefer a support group based in Chatswood, as there are difficulties for some members in travelling to Millers Point.

I would like to speak to the Millers Point Wellness group, and other OWN groups, to answer any questions they may have about the purpose and confidentiality of the Support Group. I would also appreciate any suggestions that the Management team would care to offer.

Kerry Needs

Older Women's Network Sydney invites you to the 2007-2008 Annual General Meeting

10am, Friday 22 August, Mott Hall
(9.45am for cuppas)
Argyle Street, Millers Point

- Welcome
- Presentation of Annual Report
- Elections
- 10 Member Working Group (see Nomination Form* below)
- 2 Delegates to OWN NSW Quarterly Meetings and Annual Conference
- 2 Delegates and 2 Alternates to OWN Australia Conference
- Returning Officer

Guest Speaker: Elizabeth Broderick

NSW Sex Discrimination Commissioner and Commissioner for Age Discrimination

SEX/AGE DISCRIMINATION AND YOU
Hear the Latest!

Lunch will be provided but you will need to register for catering purposes, ph. 9247 7046

You will need to dress warmly if it is a cold day.

Older Women's Network Sydney Working Group

Anyone who is a financial member of OWN Sydney is able to nominate herself or to be nominated by another member.

I,hereby nominate

.....as a member of the OWN Sydney
Working Group

I accept nomination, (signed)

.....

Please return the nomination form to Beth Eldridge

87 Lower Fort Street, Millers Point by 17 August 2007

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

New Ways of Living in Older Age

I attended the talk on 27 June organised by COTA (NSW) and The Benevolent Society. Guest Speaker was Professor Hans Becker of Humanitas (Holland)

Barbara Squires, General Manager, Ageing, of The Benevolent Society briefly summarised the work of the Society. then spoke of her three visits to the Humanitas organization in Rotterdam. She was very impressed with their housing and care of older people in Holland. Based on the Humanitas concept, The Benevolent Society has planned Apartments for Life at Bondi, the first of its kind in Australia.

Ms Squires and Professor Becker recently visited Canberra and had very positive talks with Government ministers and public servants .

Prof Becker 's enthusiasm for his subject was clearly evident when he spoke. The Humanitas organization has been revolutionising housing and care for older persons in Holland for 15 years. Humanitas set about finding a way for older people to live independently and stay part of the community

He mentioned the less than favourable atmosphere in most nursing homes, overcrowding, and loss of control of one's own life. People should be boss of their own lives and should be allowed to care for themselves when possible. Too much care is worse than too little . He spoke of the importance of pets in easing the loneliness of old age Humanitas encourages clients to bring their pets with them

In Humanitas buildings in Holland, the indoor village square contains, for example, psychologist, welfare worker, dietician, physician, hairdresser, pedicure services, beauty parlour, animal garden, sculpture garden, fitness centre, internet corner, and reminiscence museum. On site restaurants also attract visitors from outside.

Prof Becker said that the Humanitas' core values are: having clients in control of their own lives, active participation where possible, and that clients feel they are part of a big family. Staff adopt a 'Yes' culture , rather than negative responses to clients.

Barbara Squires spoke about The Benevolent Society's plans for Apartments of Life at Bondi. The development application was on public display at Waverley Council. Although there has been a lot of interest from State and Federal Governments, much opposition has come from local residents and other quarters.

The proposal includes 127 apartments in two multi storey buildings ranging in height from 4 to 10 storeys, to blend in with the existing landscape and minimise impact on neighbours.

The Society is allocating 40% of the apartments as affordable housing for pensioners and people on lower incomes. (10% to pensioners with no assets, and 30% to those with a strong connection to Waverley and with limited assets).

The Society wants to work out a fair model for all financial arrangements, including renting, and it is too early for specific details. Entry age will be for retired persons over 55 .

Care and support will be the integral component. Design of apartments and associated support services are aimed at allowing 95% of residents to stay till the end of their lives.

There will be sufficient care workers on site during the day and at least one person on site at all times during the night.

Community care services will be similar to those provided by the Society and other organizations to many older people in their own homes in Eastern suburbs

Residents will be able to have meals brought to their apartments from the on site restaurant.

There will be a day centre for people with dementia, and rooms for visiting health professionals in Scarba house.

Helen McMaugh

The Kiwis

Several months ago, the *Sydney Morning Herald* published an article by Paolo Totaro on trans-Tasman differences. Her remarks about our Kiwi sisters may be of particular interest to OWN members who missed it.

Apparently New Zealand women are "real" women, as their presenters on TV include women with grey hair, wrinkles and imperfect upper arms. Generally, Kiwi women "exude a confident, intelligent feminism that is evident across all generations and sectors".

Maybe they have been inspired by their Prime Minister, Helen Clark, whose image is of a strong, confident leader, prepared to stand up to the big powers. For example, her government spurned a possible free trade agreement with the USA in order to retain New Zealand's pacifist stance on the world stage. Helen Clark said: "The bottom line is that this government doesn't trade the lives of young New Zealanders for a war it doesn't believe in, in order to secure some material advantage." Admirable!

June West

Valuing Women

Keepers

I grew up in the 40s/50s/60s with practical parents. A mother, God love her, who washed aluminum foil after she cooked in it, then reused it (she was the original recycle queen, before they had a name for it) ... a father who was happier getting old shoes fixed than buying new ones

Their marriage was good, their dreams focused. Their best friends lived barely a wave away. I can see them now, Dad in trousers, tee shirt and a hat and Mum in a house dress, lawn mower in one hand and dish-towel in the other. It was the time for fixing things. A curtain rod, the kitchen radio, screen door, the oven door, the hem in a dress! Things we keep! It was a way of life, and sometimes it made me crazy. All that re-fixing, eating, renewing! I wanted just once to be wasteful. Waste meant affluence. Throwing things away meant you knew there'd always be more.

But then my mother died, and on that clear summer's night, in the warmth of the hospital room, I was struck with the pain of learning that sometimes there isn't any more. Sometimes, what we care about most gets all used up and goes away, never to return.

So while we have it, it's best we love it ... and care for it ... and fix it when it's broken ... and heal it when it's sick.

This is true for all things ... for marriage ... and old cars ... and children with bad report cards ... dogs and cats with bad hips ... and aging parents ... and grandparents. We keep them because they are worth it, because we are worth it.

Some other things we keep can be a best friend that moved away or a classmate we grew up with. There are many things that make life important, like people we know who are special ... and so, we keep them close!

Good friends are like stars ... you don't always see them, but you know they are always there.

Keep them close.

Anon

Contributed by June West

8/10/08 is a date to put in your diary. Don't miss Dr Norman Swan's (yes, ABC "Health Report") special appearance for OWN members. Make sure your group does not miss out. Details to follow.

Where have all The Honours Gone?

An analysis of the 2008, Australian Honours awards show a large gender disparity in the recipients of The Order of Australia. Perhaps we all need to consider why women are so unrepresented when it comes to gaining recognition for their contribution to the nation.

The table below highlights this conundrum:

	Women	Men
Order of Aust, Companion	0	8
Order of Aust, Officer	4	14
Member in the General Div	33	93
Member in the Military	0	11
Medal in the General Div	45	255

Superficially these figures could be interpreted as reflecting women's smaller involvement in community/public life. The reality, however, is the lack of recognition and undervaluing of the ever-growing contributions woman are making at all levels of Australian society. Additionally, women are often loath to seek additional acknowledgment for their work, which is contrary to the "blow your own horn" mentality of modern business and work practices.

What can be done to redress this imbalance? Women and their employers/organisations must take the initiative and nominate women for Australian Honours. Most importantly, the selection panel for these awards must be representative of both sexes and be prepared to look at all sectors of our community.

One wonders how many volunteers of both sexes are represented in the awards?

June West/ Louise Bentley. Research: Anne Barber

Granecdotes

I am a self-publisher and collector of stories, and I think it is time we recorded some of our fondest memories about our grandchildren. I intend to publish a collection called *Granecdotes*, because they will be mostly from Grandmothers about their grandchildren experiences.

If you have any stories about the marvellous things that grandchildren come out with, please consider sending them to me. I will keep you informed if you are a chosen contributor and hopefully, when I get enough, you too can be in print.

Bridget McKern – bridon@mckern.biz

Notices

New community bus service to State Library

Randwick/Waverley Community Bus Service has commenced a new service to the State Library. First outing was on July 23 to the free screening of Monet's "Garden at Giverny", and on July 30 Australian Opera's "Orpheus et Eurydice" was screened.

The bus will pick you up at your door and deliver you home again for \$5. Movies are free to all – no pension or senior's cards required.

August movies are on alternate Thursdays. August 7 is National Geographic's "Penguins and Whales", and August 21 (2 movies), "A Place in the Heart", about farmer Bill Sweeting, and "The Last Breadbox, 2008 Olympics", about three Beijing cabbies.

For those not interested in the movies but who wish to do their own thing in the library you are welcome to use the community bus service, which will give you about three hours at the library from arrival of the bus around 11.45 am.

Further information and bookings at Phone Randwick Waverley Community Transport on 9369 5366 (Darren)

Help Create the Future of OWN

What is important to you?

- Social Network?
- Political Advocates for Change?
- A National Net of Local Groups ?
- Internet Activists?
- Local, Statewide, National representation of older women?

Or do you have ideas for an entirely new model?

Last year Barbara Silverstone, one of the elders of OWN, distributed a thoughtful, urgent letter about the future of OWN. We all know that for younger/older women the world is changing dramatically. We know that the number of willing volunteers for committees, admin work, events, the life blood of OWN is dropping.

Perhaps the current OWN model does not appeal to the older women of the future?

The Sydney OWN Working committee decided to discuss Barbara's letter informally and this led to three "papers" from three members of the committee – Joan Modder, Beverley Cameron and Marjorie O'Loughlan*. The committee also decided that more "papers" in response to Barbara's important letter should be sought.

So, we are asking you, whether a long time or recent member of OWN, to spend a few minutes, write a few paragraphs, giving your ideas in answer to the vital question at the top of this page. Whether by email or written and posted in, we would love to hear from. You don't have to be formal.

Give yourself half an hour and write one idea!!!! Now YOU CAN DO THAT!

PUT YOUR NAME AND CONTACT ON YOUR PAPER

Thank you very much, Joan, Beverley, Marjorie.

**All three are comparatively recent members of OWN so don't feel you have nothing to contribute.*

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 OWN will be an enduring record of your generosity.

OWN Sydney Notices

WOW! Subscribe NOW!

Subscription to *OWN Matters* is \$22 per year, due every **JULY 1!**

Want to join **OWN Sydney** at the same time? We can fix this up in the same way, if you tick this box and include just another \$5

Would you like to donate? \$.....

Payment method

I enclose a chq/money order for \$22 - to Jun30, 2009 made payable to OWNNSW **OR** Please debit the following credit card for \$22 (plus any donation)

Visa

Mastercard

Bankcard

Total amount:

Card no.

____ / ____ / ____

Exp. date _ / _

Name on card (please print)

Signature _____

Address _____

State & Post Code _____

I need the large print version (on A3)

I'd love it on email

Email only - don't post

Email address: _____

What are Friends For?

Please send the above subscription to:

Name: _____

Signature _____

Address _____

State & PC _____

Members and friends are welcome to attend all activities

OWN Sydney AGM

10am Friday August 22, at Mott Hall, Argyle St., Millers Point. All members are welcome to attend, and interested members are welcome to stand for election for the OWN Sydney Working Group. Of particular interest is guest speaker Ms. Elizabeth Broderick (see page 18 for details). Lunch will be provided and you are requested to let us know if you are coming for catering purposes.

Wellness on Wednesdays

9.30am-11.45am every Wednesday
Held in Mott Hall, Argyle St., Millers Point.

Lost Ladies

10.00am every Wednesday, exploring various locations or topics of interest. Contact Bev Cameron: 9957 5367

Film Discussion group

You are invited to join **Tuesday 5 August**, to see *Ten Empty*. Please ring Yetty on 9665 2050 to check details.

Creative Movement

Join us in Mott Hall on Thursday mornings at 10.15 to discover your inner rhythms!
9247 7046

OWN UP – Unashamedly Political Discussion Group

We meet second Friday of the month at 75 Windmill St., Millers Point, 10.30 to 12.30. Have an early cuppa with us and bring a sandwich for lunch. Next meetings Friday 8 August. Contact Lola on 9665 8741.

Jubilation - Reaching out to retirees. All OWN members welcome 6pm-8.30pm, normally the 3rd Friday of each month. Meet at 87 Lower Fort St, or dining out together at affordable Sydney eateries.

Contact OWN NSW on 9247 7046 or email info@ownnsw.org.au

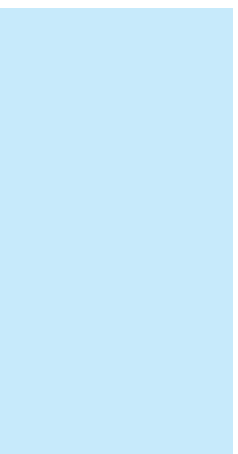
Support Group

Depression, anxiety, grief and loss are just some of the issues that touch us all at different times.

Meeting at 75 Windmill Street, Millers Point Thursdays from 10.30-12pm.

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

OWN Matters



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