



OWN MATTERS

Newsletter of the Older Women's Network New South Wales

Vol.6 No.7 – August 2009

A New Trick for Telstra

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What a nerve!

As if Telstra customers – and that's most of us – haven't already been enraged by their indifferent attitude towards our complaints about poor levels of service, they have now added insult to injury by deciding to charge consumers, from 14 September 2009, a fee of \$2.20 FOR PAYING THEIR BILLS.

And just to add a completely Gilbertian touch to this incredible cheek, they claim the new fee is aimed in part to recover the costs of dealing with consumer complaints! The arrogance is breathtaking.

Any reasonable person might think that a company so beset by complaints might consider lifting their game and improving the quality of service in the first place, but not Telstra. They choose to put their consumers into the position where they are forced to spend frustrating hours trying to resolve service problems, then impose a fine for taking up their time.

The new impost will apply for each bill payment sent by mail or made in person at a Telstra shop or Australia Post, unless an exemption applies. The existing credit card payment processing fee will increase to 1% of the payment, plus applicable GST, for most cards and 2% for Diners Club.

Just seven weeks' notice has been given about these new outrageous charges, giving Telstra's customers little opportunity to shop around to get a better deal or to reorganise their bill-paying to take advantage of the few free options available.

The one gleam of light in this monstrous new imposition on customers is that Telecom exempts pensioners and people with disabilities. However, short notice and lack of clarity about the arrangements will add to consumer anxiety and frustration.

What can you do about it if you are not a pensioner or disabled? You could switch your billing arrangement to direct debit, although you might worry about trusting a direct debit account to such a rogue organization. Payment by B-pay is another option, and it could be worthwhile to ask about the cost of other payment options (there's always the risk that they'll charge you \$2.20 for asking, of course!) or you could switch to another supplier. If the company tries to talk you into combining all your accounts into one bill, check that it provides value for money for you. It could lock you into a long-term contract.

If you have a complaint against Telstra which they haven't fixed, don't bother incurring this new fee by making a complaint to them. Contact the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman on 1800 062 058 and let him apply a bit of stick.

You can act against this injustice by letting your Member of Parliament know what you think of Telstra and its Bully Boy tactics.

So now we know what Telstra means when they say "Your call is valuable to us"... all those \$2.20's add up.

Helen Young

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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 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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ABN 36 992 030 904

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POINT of VIEW

Older Homeless Women: Neglected Again?

The Older Women's Network NSW (OWN NSW) deplores the neglect of homeless older women in Australia and is concerned that, despite the commitment of the Federal Government to reducing homelessness, older women will be neglected again. OWN's report, *The Disappearing Age*, highlights the failure of the supported accommodation system to meet the needs of older women, according to report author, Ludo McFerran.

“There are now more older women in supported accommodation services (SAAP) than older men, but not one funded service specifically for them. SAAP spends less than 3% of its funding on single women's services. Older women have to live with much younger women or in men's services, and are well down the ladder in terms of priority. This is often not safe or appropriate for them. Many of these are women who have survived a lifetime of abuse and trauma”.

The size of the problem is significant. More older women than younger women cite domestic violence as their main reason for needing supported accommodation, and one in four women reporting recent physical assault in their homes is aged 45 years and older. OWN NSW is concerned that the Government's definition of homelessness underestimates the number of homeless women.

“Older homeless women remain very hidden—it can be dangerous for them to sleep rough or to stay in boarding houses. We are now undertaking a project with Homelessness NSW and St Vincent de Paul Society to map and uncover the levels of older women's homelessness. The important investment being made by the Government to reduce homelessness must ensure that older homeless women also benefit”.

OWN NSW warns that the problem will only get worse. The predictions are that a significant number of single women approaching the pension age are slipping down the housing affordability ladder towards homelessness.

“Single women in their late fifties and early sixties have not had the time to set aside the required levels of superannuation to ensure a comfortable retirement. Economic and social disadvantage still means that women earn less, save less and retire on less. This is a group at real risk of becoming the next homeless wave”.

The full report can be downloaded from the OWN NSW website:

<http://www.ownnsw.org.au/downloads/TheDisappearingAge.pdf>

The Disappearing Age was launched at the 2009 OWN NSW State Conference on 20th July by Minister Verity Firth.

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.*

Management Team

At time of writing, the Annual Conference is only a week away, and we anticipate many insightful contributions to ensuing issues of *OWN Matters*. The Conference will also provide opportunities for members to discuss OWN major focus groups with the various co-ordinators, such as the Prevention of Violence Against Women Project, Theatre Group, Advocacy, Aboriginal Support Circle, Wellness. Another definite will be congratulating the winner of this year's Barbara Malcolm/OWN-members-magnificent-quilt-cooperative major raffle prize.

There is growing interest from female tertiary students in OWN's history and activities. Hopefully, a 'History of OWN' project, using archival documents, photographs and personal accounts of members will evolve. Could this sow the seeds of future membership from a younger cohort?

Current OWN advocacy interests :

- a submission, based on OWN's positive ageing philosophy, from OWN (Australia) and OWN NSW to Australian Government, re its commitment to develop a National Women's Health Policy;

- provide enrichment, support and friendship for older women;

- lobby for a fairer deal for older women;

- encourage discussion about ageism and sexism;

- promote appropriate policies relating to older women's health, income security, home support services and transport;

- assist older women to develop skills and to provide information;

- focus on social inequities which have a strong influence on older women's needs for more resources to enable them to remain in good health, eg unequal financial means through lower pay and lack of child care, resulting in fewer savings and little or no superannuation;

- promote significance of OWN Wellness Centres, whose focus is wellbeing not illness, emphasising the stories of 43 women involved in those centres;

- to express the need for gender-sensitive analysis of ageing, as diagnosis of women's health is often based on research on men's bodies;

- to ensure that, as 73% of aged pensioners are women, OWN has input to research, policy and practices in relation to homelessness, emergency refuge and medical screening;

- ageism, which effectively limits opportunities for older women to remain in the workforce;

- the serious problem of domestic and family violence, reported in *The Disappearing Age*, to be launched in July;

- developments in formation of NSW Health Consumers Organisation;

- invitation from Verity Firth MP to the July meeting of NSW Peak Women's Organisations;

- to analyse data available on the withdrawal of HRT from the PBS, demanding investigation and follow-up with the drug companies involved;

- work with COTA, ACON and other organisations re same-sex legislation;

- liaise with COTA/Aust Institute of Family Studies, who are seeking grandparent volunteers with care of grandchildren as a result of marriage breakups;

- to call on the Australian Government to ensure that residents of aged care facilities, their friends and families can have their complaints noted and acted upon;

We wish everyone a successful and rewarding 2009/10 OWN year, and especially welcome all new members to the Management Team.

Sandy MacDonald

Laughter Workshop

Right now seems like a good time to come along and experience the healing power of laughter.

Why not join other OWN members?

Meet Workshop Facilitator: HELEN GROVER

and enjoy a day of fun, humour and relaxation.

OWN Sydney will sponsor the FREE Laughter Workshop to be held on

Monday 14 September 2009 at 87 Lower Fort Street, Millers Point

10.30 a.m. to 12.00 noon

Please bring a plate to share for lunch

If you would like to attend, please ring the OWN office [02-9247-7046] and make a booking early, as numbers will be limited.

All at Sea



Something fishy

“How about a chowder, Hellie?”

It so happened that I had two litres of fish stock taking up space I needed in the freezer, so I said OK. Chowder isn't difficult to make, just tedious, but who was I to deny the world's best soup to a sick friend?

So off I went and bought vegetables and cream and fishy ingredients, including an enormous snapper head to make more stock, and went to work. I finished up with six litres of a chowder to die for, enough to feed the six of us, with plenty for seconds.

With the chowder in three 2-litre containers I set off for my friends' place, 15 minutes away, its appetizing aroma working up my appetite. About half way there I realized that the aroma was getting stronger ... you're right, the lid had come off one of the containers. Two litres of very fishy, creamy chowder were swilling around on the floor of the passenger's seat.

I'm glad we enjoyed the rest of the chowder so much, because it turned out to be a very expensive soup. After paying a car detailer \$77 to extract the mess with his special vacuum, my chariot still reeks of rotten fish and sour cream and is now known as The Fishmobile. It's ruining my social life. Even when it's raining, my friends suddenly need the exercise rather than accept a lift in it. I've tried sprinkling the carpet with vanilla and Nilodor. It now smells worse. If there is a magic cure for my problem, I'd be glad to hear about it.

In the meantime, anyone who wants to sample my world-famous chowder will have to come to my place for it ... but not just yet.

I'm off chowder.

Helen Young

The Good Oil

Back in 1953 the San Diego Rocket Chemical Company had a problem. They needed a water displacement (WD) compound (as you do) to protect Atlas Missile parts. On the fortieth attempt they hit the jackpot and that's how WD-40 got its name.

There's hardly a household that doesn't have a can of this magic stuff that stops hinges squeaking, protects garden tools from rust, keeps scissors working smoothly, lubricates wheels on tricycles and bikes, etc. but that's just the tip of the iceberg. I know that it cleans shower recess glass like you wouldn't believe, and it shines up a stove top like never before, but I haven't yet checked out the other wondrous things it's claimed WD-40 can do. Maybe you could use the next rainy day to check some of the other things it's supposed to be good at:

- Removes lipstick stains.
- Loosens stubborn zippers.
- Untangles jewelry chains.
- Removes stains from stainless steel sinks.
- Removes dirt and grime from the barbecue grill.
- Removes tomato stains from clothing.
- Cleans and lubricates guitar strings.
- Keeps bathroom mirrors from fogging.
- Removes black scuff marks from kitchen floor.

And if you have pigeons leaving their droppings all over your balcony, try good old WD-40. It's said they hate the smell. Well, it's not exactly Chanel, but it won't hurt you – its basic ingredient is fish oil.

There's another thing you could test, but if you're a city dweller it won't be all that easy. It's supposed to keep flies off cows.

Uma Kali Shakti



Aboriginal Support Circle Issues

Pemulwuy Plan approved!

Earlier this month NSW Planning Minister Kristina Keneally, also Minister for Redfern-Waterloo, announced approval for the \$60 million Pemulwuy project, which will transform The Block in Redfern. Our Aboriginal Support Circle viewed this brilliant prize-winning plan some years ago, in the days when then Redfern-Waterloo Minister, Frank Sartor, made sure it would not get off the ground. A floor area of 15,000 square metres is planned for a range of commercial, retail, educational, cultural and community uses, including up to 62 residential apartments. There will also be at least 500 square metres of open space, opening up the site to the surrounding area and connecting to the existing public open space on the adjacent Redfern Community Centre site. Parking is provided and principles of crime prevention through environmental design are incorporated.

Construction will be staggered and developed in three stages, providing a variety of jobs for years to come. Joining Minister Keneally at the launch were Carmel Tebbutt, local member for Marrickville, Tanya Plibersek, Federal member for Sydney and Lord Mayor of Sydney, Clover Moore.

Womanpower rules!

Pat Zinn

Enlightened Thinking on Reducing Indigenous Prison Population

One in four prisoners in Australia is Indigenous and half the 10-17 year-olds in corrective institutions are Indigenous. The proportion of Indigenous women in prison has tripled in the last twenty years. These figures are horrendous, but a recent report shows that investing in education and rehabilitation would provide other options rather than jail. It recommends making diversion programs more accessible and simultaneously establishing a network of Indigenous-only residential rehabilitation centres. It also suggests that every young Indigenous person be given an individual education fund "to assist and promote their participation and retention within the

education system". Not only do these recommendations make sense, they would be affordable. It costs \$269 per day to lock up a prisoner but \$98 per day for someone to live in a residential rehabilitation centre.

There is also a government initiative to reduce the number of juvenile offenders held on remand. There are rising numbers of young people in detention for minor offences. Many spend months in remand and when their cases are finally heard, they are not sentenced, but the damage has already been done. Nearly half the juveniles in custody report some form of serious past abuse including violence and neglect.

Diversionary programs, working with young persons as early as possible, addressing the root causes behind their bad behaviour and showing them a future that does not depend on assault and robbery, are known to work.

It is now up to people like us to lobby governments to engage in more programs that are working. Change is slow, but change must come.

Pat Zinn

Australia's Continuing Human Rights Violations

Amnesty International says Australia's treatment of Aboriginal people in custody is a serious and a grave breach of international human rights obligations. They stress that the death a WA Elder while in custody last year, was shameful and preventable. He died due to dehydration and burns after being locked into the back of police vehicle, during 50+ degree temperatures and driven over a distance of 360km. Amnesty International insists that Australian governments must act to prevent future violations.

Meanwhile the Aboriginal Legal Service of WA has called for an urgent review of policy and procedure relating to taser use in that state. Police say they were responding to a domestic disturbance, when a 36-year-old man ran at them carrying a cigarette lighter and a container believed to contain fuel. An officer deployed his taser



Aboriginal Support Circle Issues

gun and the man subsequently caught alight, suffering severe burns. Dennis Eggington, CEO of ALSWA CEO, says he is especially concerned about the impact of these weapons on Aboriginal people with medical conditions.

In other news, about 30 people from Ampilatwaja, 350kms north-east of Alice Springs, have walked off their community in protest at the Federal Government's Northern Territory Intervention. They say they will camp elsewhere on traditional lands until control of a community-run store is returned, and the government does something about poor conditions in the community.

Indigenous groups continue to speak out about continuing injustices under the present Federal and State Governments. They say a recent Report reinforces their claims, as it clearly shows not only little progress, but also some deterioration in Indigenous circumstances. This is undoubtedly a further embarrassment for governments, contradicting their claims of improving life for Aboriginal People. The Report demonstrates the need for better and more research, and proves that many current government policy approaches are largely disastrous and totally inadequate in addressing any of the problems experienced by Indigenous communities. Kevin Rudd has had to publicly concede that the Report shows that Governments have simply got to do better!

Uma Kali Shakti

Travellers' tales

My friends were telling me about their trip by car across to Perth and back and I'm still pondering some aspects of their account.

At Ceduna, in South Australia they were saddened by the passivity of older Aboriginal people, who seemed to spend most of their time sitting gazing at the sea. It was as if, now that they no longer spent their time hunting and gathering, there was

nothing left for them to do. There was certainly no need for them to hunt and gather - the local supermarket had plenty of frozen kangaroo tails in their freezer and any amount of fruit and vegetables.

Could they have spent their time painting the pictures that are now the big movers of the art world? Well, not everyone is gifted in this way. It seemed to my friends that, while the younger Aborigines of Ceduna went about their lives much as young white Australians do, these older people had been left in a vacuum, stripped of their traditional lifestyle and unable to find any sense in ours.

At the Arid Lands Botanic Gardens at Port Augusta they met an Aboriginal man, Matthew, who made a very different impression on them. He was not a tour guide, just a friendly bystander, and so proud of this country. What struck my friends was that when he referred to 'our land' he was being inclusive of all of us. He was willing to share the land of his Dreamtime with us latecomers in a way that humbled them. Did we deserve this generosity of spirit, they wondered, thinking back to those elders gazing at the sea?

Not far into the Sturt Highway to cross the Nullarbor Plain they entered the Yalata Aboriginal Land and drove to the cliff tops, where they could watch from a special platform the whales resting in the bay below on their annual trip north from the Antarctic. Pregnant females use this bay as a maternity ward, so the platform provides a great opportunity for local and overseas visitors to enjoy a unique Australian experience, as mothers and their calves bond and play in the pristine waters below. But where were the traditional owners of this land, who might have provided local knowledge? Not one in sight, only a nice, helpful white receptionist with a strong Yorkshire accent, for God's sake. They thought of Matthew. Wouldn't it have made more sense if he or one of his culture had been there to share 'our land'?

Helen Young



Letters to the Editor



July *OWN Matters* a Winner!

OWN truly is the thinking older women's organisation and I am adding my voice to those who think we should keep our name intact. There is nothing wrong with the word "old", its society's perception that is wrong. *OWN Matters* quite rightly doesn't flinch from giving voice to injustices in our society and criticising Government when its necessary. However, it's hard not to get despondent about the state of our world. So I've made a resolution to focus on what's good, what's working and what's positive. Tucked away in back pages in newspapers, in little paragraphs, in documentaries on TV and on radio are all sorts of inspiring events and the people who make them happen. I'm delighted that Women for Wik have launched their new website documenting programs, policies and activities in the Northern Territory that are actually working. (see July *OWN Matters*). In that spirit, I'm submitting articles on positive happenings in Aboriginal affairs.

Congratulations to everybody at OWN for such a terrific July issue, packed full of interesting, humorous and stimulating articles and letters.

Just what we need to beat the winter blues.

Pat Zinn

Women Who Made It Happen

The woman who broke the then Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade bans on women, Her Excellency Ms Penelope Wensley AO, later became Australian Ambassador to the UN, High Commissioner to India and is now Governor of Queensland. She spoke at a dinner I attended some years ago and read out that document.

Joan Bielski

Her Excellency Ms Penelope Wensley AO 25th Governor of Queensland

Penelope Wensley was born in Toowoomba and completed a Bachelor of Arts degree with First Class Honours at The University of Queensland in 1967. In 1968, Ms Wensley joined the Australian Foreign Service and pursued a highly distinguished career as a diplomat, representing Australia in a wide range of overseas posts and senior policy positions until 2008, when she became Queensland's twenty-fifth Governor. Among her prestigious diplomatic appointments, she served as Australia's Ambassador to the United Nations for seven years, in both Geneva and New York, as Ambassador for the Environment, High Commissioner to India and Ambassador to France. She has been awarded honorary Doctorates by both The University of Queensland and Griffith University. In 1994, The University of Queensland named her as the first female Alumnus of the year. In 2001, Penelope was made an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO), for her distinguished contributions to Australia's international relations.

Room for one more?

Great to see and hear news of the wonderful Noreen Hewett, who has been a role model for so many older women. My first meeting with Noreen was in 1992 with my friend (and founder of Gosford OWN) the late Muriel Ashcroft. On the many occasions over the following 10 years, at conferences and meetings, I was always amazed at not only the energy and knowledge of this warm, friendly woman but also her lovely sense of humour. As I am possibly facing changes to my life in the near future, Noreen, are there any vacancies? How lucky are those residents!

Good luck with the Newsletter Noreen. Any chance of a copy ?

Nancy Brown

Mining Morals

As the numbers of NSW rivers, homes etc. damaged or demolished by the effect of long-wall mining subsidence increases, two questions emerge:

1.) Are the miners greedy and taking too much risk with homes, environment and infrastructure?

2.) Are the miners' long-wall calculations and methods inaccurate and dangerous?

I can understand why mining companies donate to local charities and publish large advertisements about the good they do – jobs, for example.

But what will a young man feel if he secures a job in a mine, works hard and sometimes dangerously in mines all his working life, meanwhile paying off his mortgage for a home – then in his retirement finds his home cracking, sinking or whatever? What if he and his family have to uproot?

Letters to the Editor

Perhaps there's a lesson in the economic crisis for mining companies in Australia, many with overseas owners. It was a long time coming but it did happen – and repercussions are evident in Wollondilly families. Greed and lack of regulations were causes, according to experts.

Why not settle for “enough” profit, instead of going for too much, leaving a trail of broken homes, environmental damage and heartache behind?

Nolene Baker



Banking survey

The Australian Employers' Network on Disability is assisting a major bank to gain a greater understanding of the banking needs of people with disability. The work will contribute to a review of services for people with all types of disability.

As part of this project disabled people will be asked to complete a short survey on the barriers they face when doing their banking, and any changes they would like to see in the way services are delivered. The survey takes about 10-15 minutes to complete. The information can be provided anonymously and all questions are optional. No personal financial details are asked for it is only about your experiences and suggestions. Anonymity assured.

Contact Rachel.butler@aend.org.au or phone 02) 9261 3922.

Are we Zinesters?

When is a zine a zine, and when is a zine not a zine? I'm not quite sure whether I've been aiding and abetting in the production of a zine. Is this a zine and am I a zinester?

For the zine-challenged (pronounced zeen and short for magazine) a zine is 'most commonly a small circulation, non-commercial publication of original or appropriated texts and images'. Zines are usually self-published work, usually photocopied, of minority interest. And what is in these zines? They cover 'politics, art and design, ephemera, personal journals, social theory, single topic obsession, or sexual content, far enough outside of the mainstream not to be included in more traditional media'. So does *OWN Matters* qualify as a zine? It seems we fit all of the above criteria. Does that make us zinesters?

If you visited the Zine Fair in the Museum of Contemporary Art you might wonder. About 50 authors and makers of zines had stalls there to buy, sell or trade their wares. Why? I couldn't decide where they were going, but I think they were communicating with fellow travelers. I guess we could fit there.

Most zines are very small, many arty, and most produced by people under thirty. That excludes us. Although it is no longer just a way for those whose fetishes are punk-rock or science-fiction to share their passion, it is still a sub-culture thing. We are definitely a sub-culture. Zines also have a long history of being a way for the marginalised to have a voice and get their message out there. That lets us in. Would any of the other zinesters want to trade or buy our zine? Only if they were taking it home for the olds.

So is *OWN Matters* a zine?

One stall at the Zine Fair was from Sticky, a zine store in Melbourne. Sticky, which was founded in 2001 and is supported by Australia Council and Arts Victoria, has stocked more than 5500zines. (Do they have 5500 customers as in people who pay money?). Luke Sinclair, who manages Sticky, says most zines fit into one of four-genres: per-zines (in which people tell their personal stories), music-based zines, comic-based zines and artists' books. He told me that zines can be produced by co-operatives and that people over sixty do browse in his shop.

Sinclair says, “You can do things which Rupert Murdoch can't even imagine doing.”

Some OWN members' personal stories have been written so compellingly that they could challenge anything anyone else has to offer. We are going to send copies of *OWN Matters* down to Sticky. We can't guarantee how we'll go as zine5501, but we'll try for six months. When OWN began it was a revolution, with older women showing what they can do, and we are still showing them.

DIY isn't just for home improvements – the revolution can still be photocopied.

Lorraine Inglis

NSW State Budget 2009-2010

The State Government brought down the NSW State Budget on 16 June. NCOSS held a briefing session on Wednesday 18 June to provide some analysis and comments on the Budget. NCOSS has placed its response on its website.

NCOSS said that there were some good points about the Budget but there were also some problem areas. There was an increase in funding for the *Keep Them Safe* program (for young people), continuing the *Stronger Together Plan* support program for people with disabilities and their carers, increases in funding for public and community housing and funding to support low-income and disadvantaged families' ability to meet the increasing costs of energy and water.

However the removal of the stamp duty charge for new housing built in the next 6 months (value up to \$600,000) means a loss of \$64m per annum. This could have been invested in community /affordable housing. A general comment was made that at the official briefing, the Aged and related policy areas were not a priority for the State Government. This raises a number of issues and concerns. Above all else, it means that members of OWN need to be lobbying their local member of Parliament and the Minister for the Aged, Paul Lynch.

The following provides a brief summary of some of the key issues

1. The summary included a discussion of the *Better Services and Value Plan* adopted by the State government and referred to in the Budget. This plan claims to enable greater efficiencies and a better provision of services to the community. The *Better Services and Value Plan* could be a cost cutting exercise resulting in a loss of services and /or resources/staff. It includes the amalgamation of 130 State government agencies into 13 super Departments or "clusters". This has the potential to be a real mess.

The Plan includes a goal that any pay increase for government employees would be limited to 2.5%, any additional pay increase to be offset by employment-related savings. There will continue to be a staff freeze on non front line staff. The *Better Services and Value Plan* includes establishing a Taskforce to oversee strategic "value for money" reviews of government departments/activities. This could be a cover for cost cutting and needs to be watched by the community sector.

2. The big winners in the Budget are those areas which are capital intensive and which can be classified as stimulus

funding. This includes Housing and Education and other public works or capital works program areas. Many in the government are relying on the Federal Government's stimulus package to enable projects to go ahead.

3. Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care. The Departmental budget has an increase of \$238m (11.8%) on the 2008-2009 Budget and rises to \$2.3 billion.

Older People and Carers: In the changes to the government departments, the Office of the Aging was placed in the Communities cluster rather than Human Services. The Minister said that this will change and expected it to be located within the Human Services cluster/department.

NCOSS called for an increase of \$4.45m for the *Towards 2030* priorities and improved access for Aboriginal seniors to the Seniors Card benefits.

HACC Program is up \$54m (7.4%) to \$609.8m in 2009-2010. This includes \$40.7m to DADHC and \$14m directly to Health subject to Federal offer. NCOSS asked for State Government contribution of \$44.7m (20% increase) and were allocated only \$16m.

Proposed highlights for HACC include :

Second stage of the capital strategy for dementia day facilities

Acquisition of 2 final years Triennial plan priorities in 2009-10

Restorative/independence approach

Common arrangement strategies

Home Care Services NSW funding increases by 1.6% or \$2.7m. This is, in reality, a cut in real terms after a budget overrun of \$14m in 2008-09.

4. Health Department

NCOSS found that the briefing for the Health Department was not very clear. Part of the problem related to Federal Government funding programs and COAG reform proposals.

Spending on the Health budget has not been cut back, unlike most other Departments. There has been a 10% increase on the 08-09 Budget and a 5% increase on the revised Budget.

5. Office for Women

There was no increase in funding for domestic violence programs. Funding was kept at \$2.9m for 2009-10. In

NSW State Budget 2009-2010 continued

reality this was a funding cut, as wage indexation is 2.4%. There was an allocation of \$900,000 for programs for Aboriginal women. \$512,000 was allocated for the Violence Against Women Unit, no increase on 20 08-09

The Budget allocated \$300,000 per electorate for community infrastructure projects.

Margaret Kearney

Commonwealth Seniors Health Card

The Commonwealth Seniors Health Card (CSHC) was reviewed in July and existing CSHC holders will receive a second review form in the mail. Centrelink is collecting additional information because changes to the legislation mean two new forms of income will be included in the definition of adjusted income for CSHC purposes from 1 July 2009. The two new forms of income are:

1. total net investment losses, being the sum of losses from financial investment income and rental property income, and
2. reportable superannuation contributions – for example, income that is voluntarily sacrificed into superannuation.

These changes mean information is required from cardholders to verify their eligibility for the CSHC.

The form asks cardholders to provide an estimate of their and their partner's 2009-10 adjusted taxable income, and cardholders who have previously been granted a temporary exemption from providing their Tax File Number will be asked to provide their number. A reply paid envelope for return of the form will be enclosed.

If cardholders do not return the form by the date due (which is printed on the form) their CSHC will be cancelled. The cardholder will need to contact Centrelink within 13 weeks of the date of cancellation and provide the required information to have their card restored. If the contact is made more than 13 weeks after cancellation, the cardholder will be required to complete a new CHSC claim form.

If the cardholder's adjusted taxable income is higher than \$50 000 for a single person or \$80 000 for a couple, they may have their card cancelled. If this happens the cardholder will have 13 weeks to appeal the decision to cancel their card.

For more information about these changes go to www.centrelink.gov.au., For further information about the review, please contact Roy Chell on (02) 6155 1688

Theatre Group

Old Dogs New Tricks

The heading on last month's report was New Dogs, Old Tricks; this month's heading is Old Dogs New Tricks. When you reach the age we have I am sure our brains are almost full, yet still we are trying (so hard) to learn new words to modern songs. But that's not all, our revered and respected director, Jo-Ann, is confident that we can learn a host of new dance steps. Accompanied by seductive twirling of boas – please, it is no laughing matter. I had to look up the word seductive because I had forgotten what the word meant! It is most difficult to have the boa around one's waist when one cannot remember where the waist should be.

Between new words, new dance steps and the dreaded boas it was no surprise when our director got a fit of the giggles and turned bright red. We wondered if we should administer CPR. "It will all come right in the end" 'er out front assures us – such faith!!!

As well as some bookings in the next few months, we have been invited to Wollongong to do a Domestic Violence show in October. We are so looking forward to our concert in November as it is always nice to meet up with women from other groups. We are going to deck the (Mott) hall with bells and twinkly things so that it will bring thoughts of Christmas closer.

Please keep the wellbeing of our director in your thoughts.

That's all folks.

Josie Jackson

Removal of Rail Booking Fee

NSW Premier Nathan Rees announced in this year's budget the abolishment of the \$10 booking fee on the CountryLink pensioner Excursion Ticket. In addition, the \$1 fare deal for children travelling with adults will become a year round offer. That means that pensioners will be able to use regular economy services free of charge up to four times per year.

Pensioners choosing to use their free vouchers for first class tickets will still pay the booking fee in the form of a surcharge, as it is a premium service.

Whatever Turns You On

Burning Spirits

We don't have guests to lunch very often these days, but when we do I like to make something new and a little different from our usual fare.

This time, having flipped through long-forgotten recipe books, I settled on coq au vin, a warm and satisfying dish for a cold Winter's Day. All went well with the preparations til I reached the point where warmed brandy had to be set alight and poured over the chicken still cooking in the pot. Fortunately I had asked DS [Devoted Spouse] to be on stand-by as the thought of setting alcoholic fumes alight did contain a worrying element of risk.

I heated the brandy, DS put a lighted match into the mist rising from it and I commenced to pour the now fiery liquid onto the chicken. A column of flame leapt up instantly from the meat, reaching to engulf the range hood above it. Bemused by the sight, I noticed absently that the plastic handle on the mesh filter in the hood above the flaming pot had melted into a pretty tear-drop shape.

But from the now bright and flickering light above our heads, it was clear that the space between the filter and the copper hood above it, probably heavy with grease droplets from years of cooking, was also on fire. Apprehension swept through me as I hastened to pull the adjoining filter section out and switch the exhaust fan on. Fortunately that was still working, though I wondered vaguely if flames might be pulled into the fan itself and burn through electrical wiring, an outcome too awful to contemplate. Meanwhile DS was slapping a tea towel at the now blackened and distorted filter trying to put the fire above it out. We watched in tense and silent anxiety as. By the time the remaining flames eventually died away the entire house was filled with smoke and the acrid smell of burnt synthetic.

Of course, it was exactly at that moment that our guests arrived. We greeted them at the door enveloped in smoke and foul fumes and trying to speak coherently. (Did they think they'd arrived at the gates of Hell?) As we struggled to explain to our mildly confused visitors what had happened we rushed around opening doors and windows, immediately converting our nicely warmed house into a fine substitute for the South Pole, and hoping desperately that the strong burnt chemical odour wouldn't hang around too long.

I won't forget that recipe in a hurry, that's for sure. It tasted good and everyone ate everything, but I might try something simpler next time.

Bev Cameron

Soaring Spirits

I know what they're saying as morning breaks,
"Don't go," they whisper, as I awake.
"It's lovely in bed, why not stay in?" say these
old bones of mine in their thin, fine skin.
But something tells me ... "Ignore their pleas",
And I stagger to breakfast on creaking knees.
I push myself slowly up Argyle Place
to the Abmott Hall and come face to face
with women my age
and with Ellen, our muse,
who with heavenly music persuades us to
choose
which way to move, and to bend and to stretch.
Soon we are swaying, and flowing and gliding
and circling. Our spirits are lifting, then soaring
then singing.
Gone and forgotten the drawbacks of age
it's like butterflies freeing themselves from their
cage.
Music and movement all blending together
go where it takes us, like breeze in fine weather.
Alone in our skins, but knowing that we
are as one
with the music, each other, as she,
this Ellen, who guides us, delights and inspires us,
sweeps us along in the dance of the song.

Dorothy Cox

Photos, please!

Does anyone have photos of Theatre Group performances or cast members for the years 1995, 1996 and 1997, and for 2003 and 2004?

I particularly want photos (of any performance group) taken at the 2004 Women Centre Stage concert in Campbelltown.

The photos are for inclusion in *Women Centre Stage: Celebrating the rise and rise of Older Women's Network Theatre Group*, which is nearing completion.

Please phone me on 9660 5367 or email dcora@pacific.net.au

Dorothy Cora

At and Beyond the Rocks

PROMOTING YOUR GROUP

Kate Caldecott from *Our Community* (ourcommunity.com), a marketing and promotions strategies and community resource social enterprise, gave a presentation recently at a Sydney City Council Aged Interagency meeting.

Her subject was: Promoting Your Group, How to Get the Word Out about Yourself to New Audiences. She said the 'end people', people receiving your information, spread it further.

One major group to keep informed is your funding bodies. They already have an interest and will spread information for you, as will other stakeholders such as your membership. You need to be able to describe yourselves, your identity: who, what, why, in order to raise the group's profile and gain new members. Successful marketing programs are market driven. That is, you must find out what your stakeholders want and respond to it.

When you have a niche target group, which you are a part of - such as OWN - it is easier to study the group and inspire new membership. Look for new ways to tell people about what you do, to get your group's name out there.

Make the description more exciting, e.g. we socialize as well as on a regular basis.

A modernised Logo may be needed. Have a plan of action and use it. Look for members, or people they know, who are

good at marketing. Budget is always important so seek low cost options. You might have open 'come and try' days, and give presentations to other groups.

Have a 'media team', even if it is only one person, otherwise marketing is always an add-on job - extra work. Have a Media Release template ready. Put ads in other publications besides your own, such as seniors magazines. Use local businesses, community centres etc, who will put up notices and distribute brochures for free. You can list your group on ourcommunities.com.au.

S.W.O.T: Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities, Threats.

The group needs to think through its Strengths and Weaknesses, including its "dark side". One way of doing this is by a survey: monkey.com is a useful online survey tool providing a free and easy online survey kit. To get people to participate you could offer a gift card or similar freebie. You can evaluate the forms to get feedback, new ideas.

Opportunities, at the moment, include the government's stimulus package.

A Threat may be losing funding.

For OWN a Weakness is the ageing membership, we can counter this by partnering younger women's groups (such as the IWD collective), and find out the needs of older women of the future. Another weakness - according to people at the Aged Interagency meeting - is that people don't want to know

about ageing. The oldest Boomers are now 62, perhaps they will make ageing popular, or at least more important - due to sheer numbers.

Heather Jennings

Sydney

- OWN Sydney's Committee is continuing its updating process and has postponed the Annual General Meeting from August 21 to a date to be announced.

- Committee members will meet with members of the Theatre Group in August to settle arrangements for their mutual collaboration in presenting the major OWN Theatre Group's event in November. This will be a 'first' in terms of such collaboration and an opportunity for both groups to get to know each other better.

- Arrangements are in place for a Laughter Workshop [September 14 - see page 3] and a bus trip on 6 October .

- Sydney Wellness will be offering a six-week course on drumming on Wednesdays and a four week course in mandala painting in September. Details on page 23, also for the Book Club starting 6 September.

- Some Sydney OWN Committee members have been in some successful ventures lately. On behalf of OWN Australia, a \$97,000 grant has been received from the National Office for Women to ' . . . facilitate women's opportunities to provide systematic input in Federal and

At and Beyond the Rocks

State Government policies, planning and services development. . .’ Advocates will focus on five areas: prevention of violence against older women; health; aged care and carers’ issues; housing and access and equity for Indigenous, CALD and minority groups. A committee will begin to develop the project shortly and will employ a project officer.

· Planning of the OWN Australia National Conference, with its theme of Social Inclusion of Older women, is well under way. Conference will be held in Sydney November 30 - December 1st this year.

· Other Sydney members in the Prevention of Violence Against Older Women project have also received a [third] grant from the NSW Office for Women to continue their previous two projects, this one with the added aspect of homelessness. NSW Minister for Women, Verity Firth, launched the report, *The Disappearing Age*, at the NSW OWN State Conference in July.

Bev Cameron

Changing OWN - little by little

[See 'Evolution' May OWN Matters]

How can OWN attract women who aren't members yet, but could be? What's the difference between OWN's early membership and today's? What changes have already happened?

It is my guess that the original members of OWN were inspired to fight injustice to women in a context that was rather different from today's social/cultural/economic environment. The upheavals of the 60's and 70's led to many changes in the law and slowly action on behalf of equality for women began [I personally benefitted from the change in the divorce laws of 1975]. It was an exciting time. Some of OWN's original members, though now in their later years, are still working hard for women's rights and their mutual dedication over the years has given rise to strong bonds of friendship. Perhaps the early years were also less pressured by the demands of work, and some members may not have been employed outside the home at all, allowing more time for working on behalf of women.

Now, most older women have been working right up to retirement age in a climate where two-income families are almost essential to pay off a home. As equal work in the home is still a long way off, many have been doing two jobs for a long time. When work stops, childcare, eldercare or personal health issues begin to demand their time and energy, not to mention the increasingly complex psychological, financial and practical issues of retirement. Newly retired older women are likely to need some sort of new social network once working days are over. With time and the desire to do something to fulfil their own

lives socially and intellectually, my guess is - with the exception of a dedicated few - that it would not be for more hard work. It seems more likely they would be interested in, and learning about, issues relevant to being older. Some may wish to contribute to community advocacy, social, charity and support organisations.

A related but separate issue may be the relationship status of the woman. If she is single, her need for social inclusion and avoidance of loneliness may make her readier for involvements beyond the home than women still in partnerships.

It is my view that while social justice advocacy on behalf of older women remains the bedrock vision and work of OWN, too much focus on that will negatively affect OWN's capacity to attract today's younger-older women. At least in the first instance, they will probably be more interested in making new friends and finding appropriate activities to enjoy before they are ready to ask how the organisation works and what its core values are, let alone participating in that work.

How to better balance these two arms of OWN? Advocacy/administration on the one hand, social networking and support through shared interests and activities on the other, so that younger-older women will feel welcome and 'at-home' seem to me to be the main issues if the challenge is increasing OWN's membership.

Bev Cameron

Looking Forward

Y So Different?

My generation, the baby boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, and now aged 45-63, grew up in an era of prosperity and change, with refrigeration, antibiotics, vaccinations, TV, supermarkets, the family car, and the pill. The world changed, and they say we helped change it.

This was the generation of 'sex, drugs and rock-n-roll'. We gave the 'demo' status and were heavily into the struggle against the Vietnam War, and for civil rights and women's rights. Women had improved access to education, wanting career and family. This generation was positive, achievement-orientated, and independent; we demanded change. Because there are so many of us, we 'boomers' got many of those changes.

And are generations different? World changes have been so fast that they may have had an effect on the generations that grew up through the changes. So what about the children of baby boomers, Generations X and Y?

Generation X, born between 1964 and 1980, now aged 29 – 45, was the first to grow up when divorce and working mums were commonplace. During this period came AIDS, the end of the cold war, and huge technological advances, including better labour-saving devices, take-away meals, computers, microwaves and the digital revolution. This generation had greater access to university education, food from all nations and travel.

Generation X is more conservative than their parents, but understands the changes they achieved. They want a career, with a good income and good expectations, though they are realistic. They do not expect to stay in the same job all their working lives. They grew up through the digital revolution, so are technologically savvy. They travel widely, but expect to fit it in around their job. They value emotional security, but many postpone family and child-raising. They have bigger homes for fewer children and bigger mortgages. As parents, they are more inclined to pamper their children, organize lots of activities, and let them have their own way.

Generation Y are those born after 1980, late children of baby boomers, now aged between 18 and 28. They grew up through boom times, and at a time when their parents, probably, had more money. They have been indulged and programmed with a range of activities all their growing years. They are very comfortable with technology, and have a high opinion of their own worth, with high expectations. They are prepared to change jobs frequently, but also to live at home longer.

They pursue personal satisfaction, and are more influenced

by their peers than by authority and role models. They are both high-performance and high-maintenance and want frequent feed-back on how they are going. They expect a career plan laid out for them, and have little understanding of the need to compromise, though the economic downturn has caused some to re-calibrate their expectations.

And just how long is a generation? It used to be thought of as 25 years. I think it is the time it takes for the children to leave home, taking their computer, dog and bicycle with them.

Lorraine Inglis

Nostalgia

"So you were working in 'Hordern Bros' in 1954? I was working there in the same year!" My companion and I had been reminiscing when we arrived at this point of mutual discovery.

It had been the end of my Intermediate Certificate school year. Some weeks before, I begged my mother to let me work until Christmas. The thought of a taste of adult life and financial independence (on four pounds per week) was very compelling. Mother had agreed and, very excited, I soon obtained the requisite sales uniform of straight navy skirt and two short-sleeved white nylon blouses and set off on my adventure.

After being instructed - along with the other hopefuls - on the store's rules, hours of work, using the Bundy clock and the location of the locker room, I was shown to the ladies' glove section. There stood a long glass-fronted polished mahogany counter displaying expensive satin, velvet and leather gloves. Behind it were ranks of small glove drawers and, in front of it, several island counters stacked with cotton mesh short gloves in sensible shades and elbow length gloves with ruched sleeves. Unlike today, this was an era when glove-wearing was 'de rigueur'.

Horderns had an atmosphere of sedate conservatism. The predominance of dark, polished shop furniture and dark flooring ensured that. Where customers wished to pay using their shop credit account or by cheque rather than cash, the cashier inserted a small metal canister containing the documents into a system of long suction pipes. With a quick 'whoosh', the canister disappeared and within a short time, rattled back noisily into its wire collection basket with the customer's receipt.

When I wasn't busy, I observed the store detective. She was a tall, stately woman, always elegantly dressed,



and Looking Back



complete with handbag, gloves and hat. Each day she strolled casually around the shop floor, her brown eyes taking in the activities of both shoppers and staff. She did not speak to anyone, and I did not dare speak to her.

At lunch-hour I joined the shopping crowds. As I had a staff discount, I explored Horderns carefully, especially the cosmetics, jewellery and clothing departments, before hurrying out to crowded Pitt Street and into the adjoining 'Curzons', a shop with all the frivolous fashions a 15-year-old girl could wish for.

At the end of a day at work, my feet were tired and I would soak them in a bowl of warm water in the kitchen as I shared the events of the day. After six weeks, I had earned the princely sum of twenty-four pounds.

Hordern Brothers has long gone, as have the days of mandatory wearing of gloves and hats. Remembering that time of youthful optimism as I stood at the beginning of life's adventures makes me realise how much has changed both beyond me and within, but what a wonderful life I have had. How could I be anything but grateful?

Yes, nostalgia can be very sweet.

Bev Cameron

A Migrant's Legacy

To remember is human, because the past – personal and collective – is the wellspring of our present and our future. – Daniel Tammet.

My friend Henry migrated from Poland to Australia forty years ago, aged seventeen, and now he has written an account of his family in wartime Poland and of his post-war boyhood. He calls it his 'small legacy' to his son and future generations, to ensure they will learn something of their Polish background from a primary source. His family, still young and looking ahead, will only value Henry's incredible family history as they grow older and then it will answer many questions. Haven't we all said "I wish I'd asked Mum (or Dad) about that" when it's too late?

Poland had a terrible war, hapless victim of German and Russian massacres, terror and brutality, and Henry's family got their share. The Nazis seized both his parents, still teenagers, for slave labour in Germany, his father spent 2½ years in a Siberian coalmine courtesy of the Russians; after that the family of five struggled to survive, with little food and heating, among the ruins that were left. Yet, with the resilience of youth, and thanks to good parents, this boy managed to have a happy childhood as conditions gradually improved, all the while storing in his photographic memory perceptive observations of the Polish way of life.

Here's a glimpse that I like:

Our family shared a house with the Milewski family, whose grandparents lived with them. Mrs Milewski's father, an unforgettable character, had been a cavalry officer in World War I, highly decorated, and he looked every inch the part – tall, erect, with fierce blue eyes above a long drooping moustache and an autocratic manner. He kept his cavalry sword and highly polished boots nearby as reminders of his glory days. We boys were petrified of him – he used to threaten to cut off our private parts with his sword if we did not behave – yet we all loved him. When "dziadek", as we called him, died in 1956 everyone cried for days.

Grandmother lived on for many years, always grieving for her only son, one of the five thousand Polish officers murdered by the Russians at Katyn. She was a wonderful storyteller, and on many long winter nights she told us about life in Poland before the war.

She also told legends of knights and lords, good and evil and I hung on her every word. My mother, also a gifted storyteller, loved to tell folkloric Ukrainian and Polish fairytales.

Good storytellers were treasured when I was a boy. They were a Polish tradition, passing on the stories and legends that have been part of our culture for centuries, but sadly their time has passed. Now TVs and computers tell very different tales, but they can never spin the storyteller's web – they can't create the companionship and the warmth and security that hallowed a dimly lit room as we listened, spellbound, to fairytales and legends, while the winter winds howled outside.

Somehow, *Days of Our Lives* doesn't seem to quite measure up, does it?

Helen Young



Freda Brown (Lewis) 1919-2009

Freda lived her life working for a just, peaceful and healthy world. Her passionate and committed approach was the essence of all her endeavours, and they were many.

She travelled widely working with women fighting apartheid, for nuclear disarmament and an end to all unjust wars, as well as literacy and education programs for all women.

An enduring theme of Freda's life was a love of the ocean, beaches and surfing. She was a Waverley resident for more than 60 years. Her husband, Bill Brown, and her family were her greatest joy.

In Anne Deveson's book "Coming of Age" Freda contributed these words, "I have my own personal campaign at the moment and that is to change the image of "old". I get so sad when old people say "I'm not old". I say, "You are old, I'm old and there is nothing wrong with being old". I say to my grandchildren "See my wrinkles, I've earned every one of them. And those grey hairs, I earned every one of them. You haven't got them, have you? You haven't earned them yet; you have got to work hard before you have those very valuable wrinkles and grey hairs!"

Lee Rhiannon (Freda's daughter)

Simple Pleasures

What gives you a little burst of pleasure? It is often not a big thing, just a little event or happening that lightens your heart, even if for a short time.

For me they are:

- sitting down to read a good murder mystery
- finding that one of my bromeliads is going into flower
- a good walk
- getting a freebie coffee on my loyalty card
- playing a game of mahjong

I surveyed friends for their small joys:

- finding lots of good books in the library

- watching a movie that makes me cry
- a hard-won kiss from my little granddaughter
- being recognised after many years by some busy person like a doctor
- getting rid of all the small change in my purse
- an empty email box
- seeing the jacaranda come into bloom
- a parking space right outside my destination
- sitting in the sunshine to read
- my cat purring when I only walk past her
- buying an interesting book

Lorraine Inglis

What lightens your heart? We'd love to publish a list. Ed..

DIY Funeral

Some OWN members met up for a coffee on Easter Saturday at a cafe at Birkenhead Point, and Pamela Tolmie, who had already done some research on the subject, raised the interesting topic of how to go about organising a funeral, and in particular an "eco" or "green" funeral. DIY funerals were also discussed. This stimulated my curiosity as I did not know very much about the subject, and in the course of research I came across the following information at the OnEarth website <http://www.onearth.com.au/>, which says the following:

"An Environmentally Friendly Choice - Australia's Only Alternative Funeral Casket Manufacturer"

On the side of the page are sections that provide further information about:

- Caskets
- Legality
- DIY Funerals
- Ordering
- FAQs
- News
- Links
- Downloads
- Do-It-Yourself Funerals

Your Decision

More and more people are looking at ways of reducing the significant costs associated with conducting a funeral. The cost of an average funeral now ranges from \$5000 to \$8000 (depending on the Australian State in which you're conducting the funeral).

Although Do-It-Yourself funerals are not for everyone, with a bit of planning and consultation with a funeral celebrant, your doctor, cemetery/crematorium and hospitals a DIY funeral can be a fulfilling and intimate experience for family and friends.

The following information is based on materials compiled by the Combined Pensioners & Superannuants Association of New South Wales Inc". (Researchers can download the complete "Funeral Costs Fact Sheet" developed by the CPSA).

Then steps to follow are set out, which state:

1 Obtain Death Certificate

When a person dies the death must be confirmed by a doctor who completes a Medical Certificate of cause of death. This has to be sent to the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages within your State so that a Death Certificate can be issued.

2 Arranging the Funeral

Below are the requirements of arranging a funeral with (and without) the services of a funeral director:

(a) Death at Home

When a death occurs at home, the funeral arrangements will need to be arranged through a funeral director. This is because they can store the body in their morgue facilities and transport the body in a coffin/casket to the crematorium or cemetery.

(b) Death in Hospital

When a death occurs in hospital it may not be necessary to use a funeral director. If the hospital has a morgue (not just a holding room) they will place the body in a coffin which has been delivered to the morgue. Relatives who provide their own coffin, can then collect the body. Or, the crematorium or cemetery can collect the body with prior arrangements.

Usually the body must be removed from a hospital within five days of death.

3 Purchase the Coffin or Casket

Individuals will need to purchase a coffin or casket made of natural materials which meets the relevant State

Government legislations. To order a quality tested and approved funeral casket contact OnEarth Australia directly. OnEarth Australia is the only approved manufacturer who sells environmentally friendly cardboard funeral caskets directly to the public.

4 Conduct of the Burial or Cremation

The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages within your State must be notified of the death and relevant forms will need to be completed.

A Death Certificate is required when dealing with certain institutions and a fee applies for having it provided.

An application for burial or cremation must also be completed. All arrangements for the burial or cremation will need to be made directly with the cemetery or crematorium. Pall-bearers must be provided.

Transportation of the deceased from the hospital to the cemetery must (be) within a coffin or casket and must be dignified and with due reverence."

And even though it might seem a bit maudlin, I thought other OWN members might also appreciate reading about the subject too

Maureen King

Burial Rights

Please note that NSW Office of Fair Trading's Funerals brochure is now available in five languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, Korean and Vietnamese.

To view the English version go to:

http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/pdfs/About_us/Publications/FT373_Funerals.pdf

To view translated Funerals brochures or to order translated brochures

http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/About_us/News_and_events/Whats_new/Orderingthe_Funerals_brochure.html

If you have any problems with ordering or viewing the publications please contact

Katie Davis-Hall-Watson, Education Co-ordinator

Office of Fair Trading - NSW Department of Commerce

Ph: (02) 9619 8709

2009 OWN NSW Conference

OWN NSW Conference Review

It is over for another year, and it was a great way to end, or start a year, depending on which way you look at it. At various times it was interesting, informative and entertaining to some of those attending it. We can't say that all we did appealed to all who were there, but we did our best. Mary Bentley, from Macarthur said it was 'a mavelous balance of serious and fun'.

Susan Ryan was our keynote speaker. I enjoyed her thoughts on Human Rights, and the need for an Act of Parliament to protect them, and particularly enjoyed the way she fielded the various questions from the floor.

The AGM gave us our new OWN NSW Management Team: Jo Allon, Sand Mac, Glenda Laird, Mary Bentley, Sonia Laverty, Betty Johnson, Lorraine Inglis, Morgana Oliver-Ayers, Leonie Higgins, Margaret Kelly. We welcome them all. New and older!

It was good to have our new report *The Disappearing Age* launched by Verity Firth.

It has been great in the intervening few days to see that the subject of violence against older women has made it to the major media. I was really impressed by the thoughtful questions from the floor and the answers from Ludo McFerran and Jane Mears. Very thought provoking!

With their usual panache, the Theatre Group and the Heartbeats entertained us hugely on day one and, with equal sparkle, The Dames on day two. The excellent after-dinner entertainment, organised by Uma Kali Shakti, included a wry look at 'retirement', an alternative approach to surviving the recession by Uma and delightful contributions by The Chorus of Women and singer Camille Bernardino.

Day Two was mostly for the workshops, the four available being Belly Dancing, Telling Stories, Keeping a Good Memory for Life, and Making Videos. Pat Donaghy said it was a "great mix of workshops". I loved the Belly Dancing and I really enjoyed us taking the video camera on location and capturing the second belly dancing group.

Lorraine Inglis



Human Rights Act For Australia

The Honourable Susan Ryan AO has an impressive track-record in human rights, politics, feminism and community activism, as well as a life-time commitment to the world of academia and further education.

Following a career as a teacher and tutor, Susan became a Senator from 1975 to 1988, a Member of the Legislative Assembly from 1974 to 1975 and a delegate to the ACT ALP Branch Council from 1973 to 1988. Among her portfolios she was the Minister for Education (1984-87) and the Minister Assisting the PM on Status of Women (1983-88). Susan Ryan pioneered extensive anti-discrimination and equal opportunity legislation and policies for women, including the landmark Sex Discrimination Act 1984.

Susan Ryan was a founding member of the Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL) in ACT and became a member of the Republican Advocate Committee in 1993. She is now the Chair of *New Matilda's Human Rights Act for Australia Campaign*, and we were fortunate to have Susan as our guest speaker at the 2009 OWN NSW State Conference to explain the campaign for a Human Rights Act for Australia.

The following is a summary of Susan's paper and the issues raised.

1- It should be done:

All federal members of parliament are morally obligated to act in the interests of the community. Every Member of Parliament understands this reality: either deliberately, or unintentionally, commonwealth laws and their implementation **often hurt the rights of individuals**.

Individuals are entitled to better protection against violations of their rights by the state. *If the government doesn't do this, no one else can.*

Human rights violations have occurred more frequently as our communities become more complex - for example, as a consequence of anti-terror laws passed without the checks and balances of a statutory charter of rights, or as a consequence of structural changes in the delivery of government services, especially the growth of outsourcing to the private sector of services affecting the weakest in our midst.

While we all would benefit from statutory protection of those traditional rights taken for granted in Australia, the more frequent and serious violations affect the most vulnerable.

2009 OWN NSW Conference

A failure to use its legislative power to protect these people would constitute a massive failure of duty by the parliament. There is a view that the existing elements of our democracy: the parliament, a free press, the rule of law, the common law together provide adequate protection, and thus no specific human rights law is needed.

This view can only be sustained by those who discount the evidence of intense human suffering that precedes the correction of human rights damage, correction that might result from public agitation and belated parliamentary scrutiny.

It has sometimes been the case that following media exposure, scandalous violations of the dignity and well being of the very old may have been restrained by the authorities.

That crucial pause between the violations and the restraint will have been too long for some, who suffered terribly and in some cases died while waiting for their circumstances to be addressed.

Those who point to instances where some violations have in the long term been corrected as evidence that our existing legal and political arrangements are satisfactory, should consider the uselessness of action **after** the event in the recent tragic case of **Mr Ward**.

Mr Ward, an aboriginal elder in Western Australia, while being transported, in custody for a minor offence, a distance of 360km from Laverton to Kalgoorlie, died in the most appalling circumstances imaginable. He was literally cooked to death. The section of the vehicle in which he died so atrociously had no air conditioning, was made of metal, and reached a cauldron like temperature of 50 degrees. Those in charge of Mr Ward, employees of a private security company hired by the WA Department of Corrective Service were unconstrained, their employer was unconstrained, and the employing government department was unconstrained by any statutory requirement to consider the basic human rights of Mr Ward. No such law currently exists to protect the Mr Wards in our midst.

If a human rights act had been in place, the final tragedy would have been averted.

2. It can be done.

A Human Rights Act for Australia can be drafted that would be constitutionally valid.

A government setting out to draft such a bill would have a number of models available, of which the *New Matilda* model is one particularly robust example.

This model puts into statute the already existing Australian obligations that derive from Australia's ratification of the major UN human rights instruments. These have been listed in numerous submissions to the panel, so in summary I am referring to the ICCPR and the ICESCR, other major instruments covering women, race, refugees, children, torture and the disabled.

The process is familiar and time-honoured in Australia. For example, after ratifying the UN *convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women*, the Hawke government enacted the Sex Discrimination Act 1984. After 25 years, the only changes made to this Act by parliament have been to extend its coverage and although opposition at the time was extensive and fanatical, the Hawke Keating governments won four more elections, and no conservative government has attempted to abolish the Act.

The other important outcome of a Human Rights Act would be to ensure that those implementing laws, public authorities and those acting on their behalf develop **a human rights culture**.

The role of the **courts** in our model is to interpret laws in keeping with legislated human rights and, where this is not possible, to reach a finding of inconsistency. Such a finding should trigger a review of the inconsistent law by parliament. Only parliament can make, change or abolish laws. The sovereignty of parliament is maintained and its participation in human rights matters is strengthened.

So, it should be done.

3, the electoral politics: relevant recent surveys which have been made available to the panel show that the vast majority support such a law.

Why would any informed citizen not want this protection?

Why would any politician refuse it?

Susan Ryan

Same –Sex relationships and Centrelink

- An excellent factsheet *Declaring your same-sex relationship to Centrelink* is now available on the Welfare Rights website: <http://welfare.org.au/default.aspx>.
- Topics include: What does Centrelink need to know? How can I tell if I am living de facto?



Recognising a Stroke

A neurologist says that if medical help is available to a stroke victim within three hours, this intervention can totally reverse the effects of a stroke. The crucial thing is getting a stroke recognised, diagnosed and then getting the patient medically cared for within three hours, which can be difficult.

Sometimes symptoms of a stroke are difficult to identify. Unfortunately the lack of awareness spells disaster when people fail to recognise the symptoms of a stroke. Now doctors say a bystander can recognise the symptoms of a stroke by asking three simple questions: S, T and R

S Ask the individual to SMILE

T Ask the person to TALK and SPEAK A SIMPLE SENTENCE (coherently), ie ask a simple question such as “Is it raining today?”

R Ask him or her to RAISE BOTH ARMS.

If he or she has trouble with ANY ONE of these tasks, call 000 immediately and describe the symptoms to the operator.

Contributed by Sandy Macdonald

Using Medicines Wisely and Safely

Medicines play a major role in preventing and treating illnesses – but only if we use them wisely and safely. Taking the right medicine at the right time and the right amount may seem obvious, but it is essential if your medicines are to work properly and as intended. It will also reduce your chances of having a medical mishap that could lead to unpleasant side effects or even hospitalisation.

Make sure you understand and follow the instructions for taking your medicines. If you are unsure about any of the details, check with the pharmacist or your GP. If worried that you might forget the details, ask the GP or the pharmacist to write them down for you.

Before taking the medicine, check the medicine’s label. The label will tell you the medicine’s brand name and active ingredient, instructions for taking and storing the medicine, and any special instructions or warnings.

Have a medicine list. Taking the right medicine is easier when you get to know your medicine. The list should include:

- * The name of each medication and its active ingredient; the strength of the medicine
- * How much you should take and when you should take it
- * Any special instructions

If you are unsure about any of these details, check with your pharmacist or GP. Alternatively, you can ring NPS Medicines Line on 1300 888 763 to talk to a pharmacist who can answer any questions you may have. If you want more information about your medicines, ask your pharmacist for the medicine Consumer Medicine Information (“CMI”) leaflet, or download it from the National Prescribing Service website at www.nps.org.au/consumers.

OWN’s Disability Advocacy on Access Recognised

The draft Disability Standards, tabled in Federal Parliament by Attorney-General Robert McLelland, aims to specify the type of access which will comply with Australia’s disability laws and provide clear legal obligations for developers, with regard to new buildings and existing buildings undergoing refurbishment. Developments targeted include offices, shops, restaurants, hotels, car parks, and public facilities such as swimming pools. Seniors are among those most affected, with about 50% of Australians over fifty five having difficulty with mobility, hearing or vision.

COTA NSW Executive Director, Jon Bisset, supported the proposed legislative changes and called for them to go further. Mr Bisset said blocks of apartments should be included in the standards because they represented a housing alternative for older people.

Older Women’s Network NSW representative, Dr Sonia Laverty, argued that while heritage buildings had been given special consideration in the form of waiving access standards, heritage was often used as an excuse for inaction.

The Network’s submission suggested measures to improve access could include using audio information in foyers and lifts in all public buildings, and using braille and better signage.

From The Senior News

Reflections

How I was cured of Emergency

I'd had a dizzy spell as I prepared lunch – holding onto a table prevented me from falling – after which I felt unusually tired and disoriented, so my husband took me to the Emergency Department of a top Sydney hospital. On booking in, I was told that the fee (a considerable sum) would not be refundable by Medicare, as this was a private hospital. Would I like to fix it up now? Like it or not, what could I do, having come so far?

Because of great demand that day, the medical staff were all busy and I was told it would be about two to three hours before I could be seen or offered a bed. In the meantime, would I make myself comfortable in one of the waiting room chairs.

“Goodness,” I exclaimed, “such a long time, and I haven't had any lunch!” They kindly agreed to arrange some for me.

It wasn't a peaceful wait, as they were renovating. The place echoed with the scraping of old paint being removed and ladders clonking around. No chance of having a little nap to pass the time, and the promised food was taking its time coming, too. The dinner tray finally appeared and I had taken two gulps of a welcome soup when an attendant came to tell me that a doctor could see me now! At my insistence, the tray accompanied me into the doctor's room, but of course I couldn't eat while I was being examined. By the time that lengthy session was over and I was escorted to my allotted bed it was 3pm and I shared my cooled lunch with my equally starving husband.

I had just stretched out on my comfortable hospital bed, happy to rest after the eventful morning, when I was whisked off for endless tests, and then abandoned. When no-one came to see me for a long time, I realised we must have been forgotten, so I asked a nearby attendant if he could take us back to my original ward. This took quite a while, as he had to ring up first and get permission to do so.

By now it was getting late, and my husband was worried about having to drive back home in the dark, as he has very bad night vision. However, I had to be released from Emergency by having a final interview with my attendant doctor, who was busy with another patient.

“Just pack up your things and let's just go,” said my husband very nervously, “if I'm to get you home all in one piece.” We were just making our escape when a nurse noticed us and assured us that the doctor was finally ready.

But there was a further delay – the urine sample I had provided during the tests had got lost somewhere in the bowels of the general hospital and I had to carry out the whole annoying procedure again! Finally we were allowed to leave.

That night I reflected on how much more restful it would have been to have stayed at home. The following day I felt extra good and vowed never again to be tempted near Emergency.

Trudy Davis

If I Had Lived My Life Over

– by **Erma Bombeck**

I would have gone to bed when I was sick instead of pretending the earth would go into a holding pattern if I wasn't there for a day.

I would have burned the pink candle sculpted like a rose, before it melted in storage.

I would have talked less and listened more.

I would have invited friends over to dinner, even if the carpet was stained, or the sofa faded.

I would have eaten the popcorn in the “good” living room, and worried much less about dirt when someone wanted to light the fire in the fireplace.

I would have taken the time to listen to my grandfather ramble about his youth.

I would never have insisted the car windows be rolled up on a summer day because my hair had just been teased and sprayed.

I would have sat on the lawn with my children and not worried about the grass stains.

I would have cried and laughed less while watching television and more while watching life.

I would never have bought anything just because it was practical, wouldn't show soil, or guaranteed for life.

Instead of wishing away nine months of pregnancy, I'd have cherished every moment and realised that the wonderment growing inside me was the only chance in life to assist God in a miracle.

When my kids kissed me impetuously, I would never have said, “Later. Now go get washed up for dinner”.

There would have been more “I love you's”. More “I'm sorry's”.

But mostly, given another shot at life, I would seize every minute...look at it and really see it...live it...and never give it back.

Contributed by Yetti Windt

Notices

Battle Axe Film Unit - Program I

21/08/2009	Introduction to filming with video equipment	Camera, tripod, headphones, microphone
28/08/2009	How to frame a shot	Camera, tripod
4/09/2009	Lighting	Lamps, natural lightings
11/09/2009	Sound	Headphones, microphone
25/09/2009	First interior filming	Studio
2/10/2009	Second interior filming	Studio
9/10/2009	Location filming	To be decided
16/10/2009	Wrap up	Studio

A Society for All Ages

AAG (NSW) & COTA (NSW) Seminar – 12 August, 2009

The Seminar, **A Society for All Ages - Are We there Yet?**, will look at how much older people have been agents and partners in ageing policy and service delivery.

Guest speaker **Mr Tim Bowden**, Journalist, broadcaster, social historian and author, will talk about the Public and Media Perception of older people. Most importantly the speakers and panellists will challenge how much of this is reality and what is needed to shift the perception of older people from being patients, pensioners etc to being active agents and partners of service delivery, practices and models.

Prof Julie Byles and Heather Johnson will look at the History of the International Year of Older Persons 99. Assoc/Prof Michael Fine will present the Progress on UN Principles for Older Persons. Other presenters and panellists include—Prof Lisa Jackson-Pulver, Graeme Innes, Disability Discrimination and Race Discrimination Commissioner, HREOC, Sev Ozdowski, Equity and Diversity Director, UWS, Pino Migliorino, Chair of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Ageing & Sigrid Patterson, Director, Office for Ageing, Christine Regan, NCOSS and Sheree Freeburn, Carers NSW.

DETAILS : 9.30am - 4.00pm Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts Level 1, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney

Member AAG or COTA : \$40.00 Non-Member: \$50.00 Concession (student/seniors) \$25.00

Phone: 02 9767 7158, Fax 02 9767 5419

Email: janetg@med.usyd.edu.au

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 OWNSW 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 _____

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I need the large print version (on A3)

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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

Wellness on Wednesdays

9.30am-11.45am every Wednesday

Held in Mott Hall, Argyle St., Millers Point.

Lost Ladies

10.00am every Wednesday during school terms, exploring various locations or topics of interest.

Film Discussion group

You are invited to join Tuesday 11 August, to see *Beautiful Kate*; recommended for viewing are: *Last Ride*, and *Lucky Country*.

Please ring Yetty on 9665 2050 to check details.

Coffee and Gossip at Bondi Junction

You are invited to join us at The Coffee Shop, Eastern Suburbs Leagues Club at 11.00 on the last Friday of every month for an informal get together. Enter from 2 Bronte Road, Bondi Junction. Contact Yetty on 9665 2050

OWN Sydney Wellness is now offering a 6-week course in Drumming 12.30 - 1.30pm Wednesdays, September 9 to October 14, Mott Hall, Argyle St. Millers Point - \$4 each session. Drums and gourds are provided. If you would like to drum please leave your name at OWN, ph 9247 7046.

OWN Sydney Wellness is starting a Book Club on 21 September. 1-3 pm at 75 Windmill St. First book is *Romulus My Father* by Raimond Gaita. Ring 9622 0717 for details.

OWN Sydney is offering a new class in Mandala Painting to commence in October.

Like to join? Leave your name at OWN, phone 9247 7046.

Battle Axe - Rhoda Sexton and Susan O'Brien

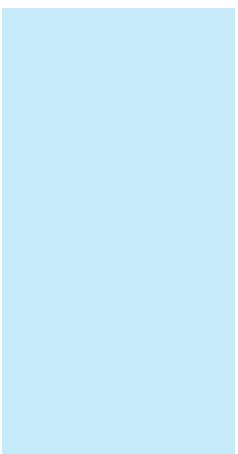
Learn to shoot, direct, script, edit and produce your own TV. Each Friday 1-3.00pm at 75 Windmill Street Millers Point, some classes on location.

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

The Battle Axe group would like anyone interested to join an 8-week workshop on using a video camera. We have been going now for almost a year and would like to pass on what we've learned to others, so that they can have fun too. And it is fun. Don't be intimidated by the technology, it's a means to an end and that end is to pass on experiences, stories and just be older women 'out there'. Prog p. 22.

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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