



# OWN MATTERS

Newsletter of the Older Women's Network New South Wales

Vol.7 No.2 – March 2010

## *Evidence-based hypocrisy*

On 6 March thousands of women will be marching for International Women's Day, the one day of the year when women rule the streets.

This year the Sydney IWD Collective has chosen to focus on the following demands: Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander women to determine their own future; no more femicides; zero tolerance for all forms of abuse; pay equity; and justice in the law.

We chose these demands before we heard that the Office for Women had decreed that it was our mission to 'Empower Women to End Poverty by 2015'.

So how does a nation set about empowering its women, and how does it judge its achievements in this area at an international level?

As a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Australia committed itself to take all appropriate measures, including legislation and temporary special measures, so that women could enjoy all their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Yet there persists in 2010, a gender disparity that conveniently minimizes issues that impact on women. This actually reinforces their disempowerment. A prime example is the area of Domestic Violence.

In NSW alone, in the years 2003-2008, 215 people (42% of all homicides) died as a result of domestic violence. Most of those who died were women. In addition, approximately **one in five** women in Australia (19%) have experienced **sexual violence** at some stage in their lives since the age of 15, and **one in three** women (33%) have experienced **physical violence** at some stage in their lives since the age of 15.

The NSW state government budgeted \$504,000 this financial year to set up the domestic violence homicide review panel, to create a mechanism to systemically analyse all domestic violence homicides. All states consider that DV deaths are preventable, however funding is limited because the crimes that precede the murders often go unreported, and therefore they fail to generate the required evidence to justify funding increases. Greater resources for intervention and support *before* the crisis would actually save lives.

Now consider terrorism. To date, although around 100 Australians have died in terrorist attacks overseas, not a single person has been killed in a terrorist attack on Australian soil. A calculation of annual fatality risks for the period 1970-2007 indicates that the risk of being killed in a terrorist attack in Australia is 1 in 33,300,000. Our Government's response to terrorism, on the other hand, does not reflect these statistics.

Since 2001, Australia's total defence spending has increased 59% from \$13.7 billion to \$21.8 billion. More than \$16 billion will have been spent in extra defence, counter-terrorism and foreign aid in 2010-11.

Even after September 11, when the statisticians did the modelling in the US, they concluded that although 1440 US citizens died in the attack in 2001, three times as many Americans died of *malnutrition* during that same year.

Clearly the concept that some hypothetical citizens with twisted ideology, who may plan to rape, torture or threaten the lives of you or your children, has stimulated a massive reaction in order to protect *theoretical* victims. But when

*continues page 2*

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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

## We includes me

*Someone should ...* is my least favourite phrase, and one you hear frequently in all kinds of discussions – especially in volunteer groups. *Someone should* write a letter to the papers, *someone should* contact the Member of Parliament or the mayor, *someone should* email our members, *someone should* represent us, *someone should*...

If the people saying it were honest they would say, *Someone else should*..., because that is what is usually meant. The person saying, *someone should* is disowning the suggestion, even as they make it. They very rarely want to do whatever it is that they think *someone* should do.

“Someone should” ban the phrase *someone should* in discussions and meetings. I'm quite willing to so move.

There are alternative ways to make suggestions. “Someone should” put up a list of ideas, and I've been thinking about this. This is not simply a lesson in semantics, but really saying that suggestions need ownership. Alternative suggestions might be:

Does someone feel confident to...?

Do you think we could...?

We could have a group effort at...

Why don't we...?

If someone did... I could...

We could ... if we ...

Could we set a time for all of us to...?

As a group we could...

If we decided to... I would...

What do we think we can do about...?

Suggestions that have 'we' in them are less likely to annoy others, because 'we' is the plural of 'I' and so the suggestion includes the person who made it. So if we think that *someone should* do something, someone is us.

Lorraine Inglis

## Evidence-based hypocrisy from page 1

women and children are *actually* being killed at an alarming rate every year through domestic violence, being forced into refuges, or people are starving to death, it's neither a national emergency nor a national disaster, and there is no need to allocate appropriate resources.

As women, where does our government suggest we access the resources to end world poverty by 2015? Although women are indeed the reluctant treasurers of the world's poverty, our biggest challenge lies in finding a way to put the lives of women and children into the national consciousness and economic reckoning, so that we can shift the government's focus from the hypothetical fight against global terror, to the real battlefield of domestic violence, and other preventable deaths from causes like malnutrition and homelessness. That would be empowering indeed.

Beth Eldridge

**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.*

The OWN NSW Management Committee meetings cover a huge range of topics.

We are all very impressed with the good natured efforts of Merrill Woods, regular Thursday volunteer in the office, who now attends the meetings and provides us with a great set of minutes. Thanks, Merrill.

A recurring issue in the past few months is The Strategic Plan. Sound familiar?

It's good to know, now that we've become more conscious of it, we're doing very well in fulfilling the goals of OWN NSW in the way we said we would. We do need to update it, and this will be done. We've decided to note in the various reports and in discussion at meetings, the particular objective that each activity, initiative etc is fulfilling – very simple, very reassuring that we're keeping on track. Sonia Laverty is leading the way here. Next job on the list is to get some updated policies and procedures in place.

Staff development and appraisal is another priority. A meeting has now been organized to have discussions with Beth and Kris about all aspects of their jobs.

We're very conscious of the demands made on them. A goal of the meeting will be to come up with ideas and new approaches on getting the work done and helping the staff keep cool.

With International Women's Day coming up, all kinds of interesting material is being prepared for the Memory Tent. Some of the themes – women at work; representation of the female body in film, advertising, climate change, sexism in kids toys, women in leadership. The graphics are great. Be sure to visit – you'll get a real buzz.

The History Project is going well too. OWN's history is fantastic.

Dorothy Cora's work on the book "Centre Stage" about the Theatre Group has been the catalyst for this. Interviews with foundation members are now under way following a special lunch towards the end of last year to launch the project. The women really enjoy talking about what they achieved and how they achieved it.

Betty Johnson has plenty of stories arising from her involvement in health issues – as have many committee members. She and others have been working hard on setting up an "Independent Health Consumers Network for New South Wales". This would bring NSW into line with other Australian States and provide a much needed – obviously needed – balance into decision making and providing feedback from the "customers" to the "providers" of health care. The "Older Women Ageing Forum" on 29 April at the Petersham Town Hall should bring forth plenty of consumer feedback too.

*Margaret Kelly*

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## International Women's Day 2010 – Women demand a fair go

It's a day of *celebration*, it's a day of *protest*. *Celebration* that violence against women is now illegal, *protest* that women are still denied true justice by the law; *celebration* that women may now work in areas once exclusive to men, *protest* that they do not receive pay equity.

The theme of this year's International Women's Day on 6 March 2010 is A FAIR GO FOR WOMEN, in Australia and around the world, and on that day women will take to the streets of the Sydney CBD to claim what's theirs – sometimes by law but rarely in reality.

International Women's Day has historically been an occasion when women have campaigned for full social, political and economic rights for their gender, from the Indigenous women of Australia to the Mexican victims of the Juarez femicides to maternal deaths in Africa.

This event is an annual opportunity for women to gather in Sydney and make some noise about the things that matter to them. While there are smaller events across metropolitan Sydney, the march and rally continue as a way of putting women's issues in the limelight and ensuring there is dialogue on issues affecting women.

The day begins at 11:00am when the crowds gather at Town Hall before marching to Martin Place at 12 noon. At Martin Place there will be speakers and performers, as well as stalls and a memory tent documenting women's history.

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# Our OWN Stories

## Minimalists and Clutterbugs

I am a minimalist. I like order and space and feel ill at ease when surrounded by clutter and disorganisation. Disposing of unwanted items is an easy source of personal gratification. Clutterbugs – people who love and perhaps feel they need to be surrounded by ‘stuff’ - are my opposite number. I suspect they may be in the majority in our consumer society.

Mother, a 92 year old clutterbug battling minor forgetfulness and slowly diminishing hearing and vision, had stoutly resisted all calls from my sister and myself to move into more suitable – and smaller aged - care accommodation until she developed a cancer. When it went into remission it was clear to my sister and me that she could no longer live alone and care for herself, despite her many heartfelt protests to the contrary. My sister took on responsibility for continuing medical and personal needs and I took over the rest. I should have salivated at the prospect of so much throwing out, with its ultimate reward of restored order and simplicity. How little I understood what I was in for.

After sorting her crammed drawers and boxes full of business and other papers came the task of wading through her personal and household effects – photos, memorabilia, letters, half-finished leisure projects, drawers full of cosmetics, medications, prescriptions, toiletries, keys and general personal paraphernalia. Then there was her clothing to package up, followed by the job of dismantling the rest of the fully equipped household. I began to feel crushed. Even Dracula can O.D. sometimes.

The next challenge was – and continues to be – living with Mother’s stuff piled all around us in our small home while she deliberates on what she wishes to keep and what she can let go. For me, this is truly stress territory. The imported clutter is gradually being analysed and disposed of to willing family members and friends, local charities and in the last resort, the council junk collection, while I deliver to Mother’s new home anything she decides to keep, having first to point out that much that she would like simply will not fit in and then having to cope with her consequent disappointment.

Reflecting on our family crisis, I have been surprised and encouraged to hear a recent ABCRN program on domestic design suggesting that more people today are choosing to live with fewer possessions, relying instead on electronic technology to fill the gap. This good news was reinforced shortly afterwards by an ABCTV presentation on contemporary home design showing modern interiors devoid of any but basic and essential items which are

nevertheless aesthetically pleasing and liveable. At these interiors I gaze with delight!

If I have learnt anything from Mother’s recent distressing dilemma, it is to keep on my minimalist path so when my time to move on arrives, my sons will not have a repeat of the same scenario. But that thought makes me smile wryly at its irony. They are both clutterbugs themselves!

*Bev Cameron*



## Five Friends

About two years ago a very dear friend was very distressed when she had to put her husband of over 40 years into full time care, due to his suffering from Alzheimer’s. Whilst going through that process, she met four other women who were travelling the same journey; each was as upset about it all as my friend. They supported each other and now meet for coffee and do the usual things friends do, sharing their stories and their friendship.

Joy Roe always loved poetry and has written this poem about their experiences. We would like to share it with you:

### Five Friends

Sisters in arms oh what support,  
No guns, just acceptance and warmth.  
The five of us have surely grown.  
From being together and not alone.

Our experience has been the same,  
A loved one, who we shall not name,  
Taken too soon, in body and mind.  
And leaving us, heartbroken behind.

But being together and sharing our load,  
Has made it lighter, on the road,  
Love and laughter, joy and tears,  
We share it all, and will for years.

Five women from different places,  
Robust, determined, happy faces.

# Our OWN Stories

Realising that life goes on.

Being together has made us strong.

*Joy Rowe, Perth, WA*

*Submitted by Barbara Malcolm Illawarra and  
Wollondilly OWN*

## Unwelcome Visitor

The grasshopper rested high on my bedroom wall. No elegant, emerald green, long-legged and slim-bodied creature he, but a brown, thick-bodied, square-headed invader with short horns and powerful limbs. I wondered if he were one of the swarming variety escaped from its devastating horde. I'd heard they ate anything in their path and wondered vaguely if that included human flesh. I regarded him briefly, deciding to gamble on leaving him there until morning and dropped into bed, eager for sleep.

But, in the pre-dawn hour of lighter sleep, my restless dreams were halted abruptly. A light, prickly sensation was moving up my arm. Instantly, I guessed what it was, and shook it off violently. I heard a soft 'plop' as the unwelcome creature landed somewhere nearby and fell back into my dreams, but not for long. The spidery sensation returned, now moving up my shin, inducing me to leap out of bed immediately and to switch the light on to find the culprit and dispose of him once and for all. Unfortunately, he was nowhere to be seen. I decided he had probably come to his senses and had flitted out the open window. I returned to my slumbers and dreams.

Several days passed. I reached for a book from my shelves. My fingers closed around an invisible, twiggy yet soft object clinging to the side of the book. My fingers recognised my unwelcome visitor instantly. Disgusted, I dropped the book and seized a handy container. Lest he jump at me, I took my time and with total focus, ensnared him. I could see his red, beady eyes as if taunting me, 'Go on! Kill me! I don't care!' His expression seemed defiant.

Tempted though I was, I decided not to kill him. Clearly, if he'd chosen to take up indolent residence in my room rather than flying free in the great outdoors, his days were numbered anyway. Taking captive and container into the garden, I watched him crawl out and left him sitting dazed on a vine leaf.

When I returned shortly afterwards, there was no sign of him. I hoped he had found more suitable accommodation.

*Bev Cameron*

## Mutual Obligation

Gonna get a bus to Centrelink tomorrow.  
Got an interview at ten past ten.  
Although I'm sixty-four, I've been told to work some more;  
and no money for a pension  
is another thing to mention.

Working for the dole is the option I've been given.  
I've been told I have to pay my way.  
Even though my hair is grey and my health has gone astray,  
they don't care; don't think I matter  
as my future they just shatter.

I have always worked and not asked for assistance.  
Independent I have always been.  
But now I'm old and grey  
they're throwing me away  
because of Mutual Obligations.

Politicians retire with lots of perks, plus super;  
free flights, chauffeurs to drive them about.  
Things won't look so bright for their future.  
We can get together and vote them...  
get together and vote them...  
get together and vote them OUT!

*Josie Jackson*

Join us at Town Hall Sydney  
6 March 11am.  
March down George St  
to Martin Place at 12.



# Letters to the Editor



## A three dog night or whatever!?

I am not fussed one way or the other about dogs on beds, in the bedroom or elsewhere in the house. Whatever gets you through the night safely, peacefully and warm, I say!

Nor am I particularly concerned about what we call our canine friends, pets or companion animals. I don't think of my dogs as anything but 'the dogs'! And, since I live alone, I have my dogs sleeping on their mats in my bedroom.

We have slept around, my dogs and I, in strange houses and places, including in the car in the bush and on the side of the road, and I have learnt to trust their instincts and sleep peacefully. They alert me to things well in advance, like thunder storms and approaching visitors, including those coming in over the back fence, uninvited, and possums in the lounge room.

In return they trust me to take them for walks, provide challenges for them, feed them, heal them when necessary, let them follow me around the house, sit with me and generally be around. And its fun!

So, Lorraine, I think you are missing something and it's not just the fleas. And, what's a bit of poison between friends anyway.

Here is a poem I wrote some years back:

## SHE

She walks with me, hardly ever beside me

She's either in front or behind.

At times I see her bum wagging in front, or suddenly she rushes past.

She comes when I call, or I see her looking for me in the distance.

We don't talk, just walk.

When I turn for home she turns too.

It's the best time of the day

To see her run and play

She's my dog and I love her

As she does me.

*Sonia Laverty*

## Go, Josie!

Josie, your delightful piece in February *OWN Matters*, product of a mind which has '...all the time in the world to think of crazy ideas...', made me laugh out loud and hurry to share it with friends. Don't stop now – let that crazy [creative] mind run free. There are lots of us thirsting for more!

In hope,

*Bev Cameron*



## MY ONE AND ONLY

From director Richard Loncraine (*My House In Umbria*), this breezy 1950s-set journey follows the refined and enchanting Ann Deveraux (*Renee Zellweger*), who packs up her life, including two teenage sons, buys a Cadillac convertible and embarks on a cross-country trip to get away from philandering, society bandleader Dan (*Kevin Bacon*.) Ann's goal: to find herself a new husband. Yet what this unconventional family discover is something altogether more wonderful.

Here is a link to the trailer:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/HopscotchFilmsEnt#p/a/u/0/HMDVFEOw>

We have 20 preview passes for March 5/6/7 for volunteers who come and work on IWD projects, see Beth in the office!

## Go Green

Find out how to lower your household emissions and your bills by booking your FREE home sustainability assessment with a qualified assessor. An assessment can identify simple, no-cost or low-cost actions you can take to lower emissions (as well as possible home improvements for home-owners).

The assessment takes about 1.5 hours and appointments are available days, evenings and weekends and are available for renters and homeowners alike.

The assessments are paid for by the Australian Government's Green Loans Program which is also providing interest-free Green Loans for recommended improvements. There is no obligation to act on any suggestions.

For more information about the assessments go to [www.homesustainabilityassessment.org](http://www.homesustainabilityassessment.org) or [www.environment.gov.au/greenloans](http://www.environment.gov.au/greenloans).

To make a booking contact 1800 895076 or [bookings@homesustainabilityassessment.org](mailto:bookings@homesustainabilityassessment.org)

# Theatre Group Report

Well we're back! Rehearsals began again the first week of February – twice a week for a while. Luckily Mott Hall seems to be free Friday mornings for the extras.

Last year finished with a 90<sup>th</sup> birthday truly community event held in Mott Hall which included the local school, opera singers accompanied by a pianist who is also 90; then on 13 November we opened the Politics in the Pub program on Ageing. Our last performance of the year was for the OWN Australia National Conference. At last, on 8 December, we had our Christmas Lunch at the 18ft Sailing Club near Milsons Point, looking out over the Harbour. We enjoyed delicious food and good company and this year both Beth and Kris made it. Sadly, we farewelled Jo-Anne Cahill, our director during 2009 – she went off to do more showbiz stuff.

Then we took time off to get back together with family members, friends and did some different activities. But, before actually concluding, we knew



we would have to find a director as quickly as possible in order that we could all work together from the start of the 2010 season. So we did make a couple of dates in January to speak to people who might be interested in working with us.

Now, with the beginning of the 2010 season, we're busy rehearsing for a performance on 24 February for the Chatswood Golden Age group, International Women's Day at Campsie – an open air site! There will be another March event and a new script *Don't Knock Your Granny* which looks at Elder and Financial Abuse – very

important topics for everyone's attention.

All this is under the direction of Grace Barnes, who joined us on 2 February as our new Director. Grace is a Scot but took a BA Film & Television at the Australia Film & TV School and, needless to say, lives in Sydney. She is Associate Director for the 2010 Australian Tour of *West Side Story* and was Associate Director for *Guys and Dolls* in Melbourne and Sydney last year. She has worked with community projects and in Edinburgh was co-director/playwright for a project involving actors with disabilities/special needs – background appropriate for the TG?! Grace has also taught musical theatre courses at NIDA, in Singapore and Glasgow. We might be her toughest assignment yet...but she says we're good!

We are really looking forward to learning from our new Director and continuing to spread the word about OWN.

*Marjorie Moffat*

## *Centre Stage* - have you got your copy, you can help us promote it!

*Being young is wonderful, but it's not a lifetime career is it?* – Louise Anike

*Centre Stage* is a story about feisty older women. They refused to be invisible ... to be taken for granted and, as part of the Older Women's Network they formed a theatre group that became renowned for its wit and wisdom and downright irreverence for everyone who put them down. No one was safe from their waspish wit, their relentless honesty – politicians, doctors, perpetrators of violence, community attitudes, even their own children, all of them got a serve.

Take your copy to your local librarian and let her/him see what happens when spunky women get bright idea.

If you have any other ideas for promoting *Centre Stage* please contact Peg Hewett on 9247 7046 or 9389 2428

# Aboriginal Support Circle Issues

## Remembering Ruby

My first meeting with Ruby Hunter was at the Aboriginal Advancement League (Old Building) in Melbourne, where I was living at the time. The league had organised a meeting for women and the Briggs Girls encouraged me to go. My grandfather and Grandmother knew the Briggs family, as they were involved in the early 1930's "Aboriginal Rights Movement".



Ruby was there, as were most Aboriginal Women of Melbourne. She was very stylish in her fashionable outfits (she was the Aboriginal version of Lee Lin Chin from SBS). I remember her red beret tilted at an angle, which became her fashion statement over the years.

### Who can Forget:

THAT incredible voice! No one else had one like it.

Ruby and Archie taking in and raising many children

The many times of entertaining in the Community, which often brought tears to our eyes.

We took on the song "take the children away", which identified not just an issue,

but identified both you and Archie as family. The song became an anthem, not just for the Stolen Generation, but for all the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities. We all cried when we heard it. We all were from communities from which the children were taken, and so we cried.

So to-day we cry, Ruby, for you have been taken from us. We say to Archie and your family, "Thank you" for sharing you with us all.

Thank you, Ruby, for being who you were, and giving and sharing. We hope you will now Rest in Peace.

We will talk about you in the community and tell future generations about your life. Farewell for now, Strong Sister.

*Kaye Mundine*

## History of La Perouse Primary School

The present primary school at La Perouse has an interesting history and I'm indebted for the following information to Lucy Porter, who was herself a pupil at the school.

In 1868 a local Customs officer, Michael McDermott, offered a large room at Customs House to be used as a school. The 21 pupils were enrolled, being the children of local gardeners, fisheries and customs employees, as well as Aboriginal children who lived in the district. The school was called Botany Heads Public School and is one of the first recorded instances of Indigenous and non-Indigenous pupils being integrated at a school. The Tower, part of the building, is still a landmark in La Perouse.

A new school, renamed the La Perouse Public School, was erected at the corner of Bunnerong and Yarra Roads and opened in 1910. However, due to a massive termite invasion, pupils had to be housed in demountables and, for a time, in the



# Aboriginal Support Circle Issues

Aboriginal Mission Church across the road, until the school was repaired. It was classified as a disadvantaged school as many pupils came from the camp at Happy Valley, where people were unemployed, and from the Aboriginal mission at La Perouse. However, in the 60's, a brand new brick school was established with 480 pupils, 16 full-time and 2 part-time teachers.

Because of its isolation, there was a strong community connection to the school, with several generations of families being educated there. Families intermarried and many of the current pupils are related. Many remarkable athletes, including the Ella brothers were educated there.

Many families moved away from the area and enrolment decreased, causing fears that the school would be closed. However, under the direction of a dedicated and caring headmistress, Liz Sinnott, and her staff, school numbers have increased and the school has become a vital, important and dynamic presence. Today, approximately 72% of the present pupils are from an Aboriginal background and 12% from a non-English-speaking background.

*Pat Zinn*

## The Indigenous Stock Exchange (ISX) Website Highlights Products and Services

The ISX is a "free market for listing Indigenous business ideas, products, investment opportunities and people and gets between 200,000 and 500,000 hits a month". In an email I received this week, Valery Dhammarrandji, who contacted the ISX with her request for a family bus, due to the high cost of taxis in Broome, was able to buy her bus thanks to two sponsors. This success was achieved through contacting voluntary Secretary, Peter Botsman, at the website [info@isx.org](mailto:info@isx.org)

Another success story comes from Arnhem Land, where a young Aboriginal leader, Damien Djerrkurra, was able to

combine with Deltareef, Arnhem Land's best Indigenous oriented building firm and now, through the Djerrikura Construction and Civil Works Alliance, it is actively tendering for work and achieving great results for economic development in Arnhem Land.

The ISX is not a financial market and does not sell or trade financial products of any kind. What it promises is to "showcase Australian Indigenous business, products and opportunities... to an Australian and international audience that includes investors, ethical investors and ordinary people willing to make contributions to support Indigenous initiatives."

How's that for enterprise!

*Pat Zinn*

## Tranby College Hit By Funding Cuts

Tranby College in Glebe, founded 52 years ago, has had to cancel its literacy, numeracy and business courses, turning away enrolled students because of funding cuts. Literacy training has been the college's core activity, enabling many students, who missed out on schooling, to get jobs and to go on to higher studies.

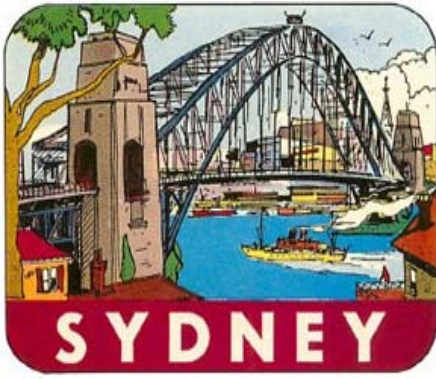
The Howard government removed its "special Indigenous status" and cut \$200,000 from its yearly funding four years ago. In spite of receiving \$212,128 federal funding last year and massive effort by the "Friends of Tranby" there was a deficit of \$917,000 in 2008 with a shortfall estimated at \$450,000 last year.

Representatives of the Federal Education Minister, Julia Gillard, are meeting with Tranby managers in the next few weeks to discuss Tranby's financial position and, we hope, its future viability. The present government has pledged to "Close the Gap" between Indigenous health, education and life expectancy and surely Tranby College needs to be able to continue its important role in education now and in the future.

*Pat Zinn*



# At and Beyond the Rocks



## Sydney OWN

The publicity has gone out for the Mount Tomah trip the gardens there certainly sound inviting. The bus is filling up fast, so get your name on the list and don't miss a day trip to these beautiful Botanic Gardens set in natural surroundings. The cost has been funded partly by the Sydney Council and partly by Sydney OWN.

Sub-committees have been organised to ensure optimum planning and smooth running of events (and of the Sydney OWN Committee itself in matters such as compliance with our constitution, overseeing guidelines and constitution framework).

Also to ensure we are consistent, follow correct procedures and guidelines are in place and being followed. Sydney OWN is looking to move forward, increase its membership and membership involvement in OWN.

Whether it's in event planning, administration skills or just plain coming along and enjoying yourself that you excel, you can contribute. Our event schedule for the year is quite full, and there are the ongoing activity groups - Book Club, Drumming, and Mandala Making among others. These social gatherings are designed

to unite older women in health and wellbeing, working together for their common good now and in the future.

Membership and involvement has been increasing over the last few months and this can in part be attributed to the social activities of Sydney OWN.

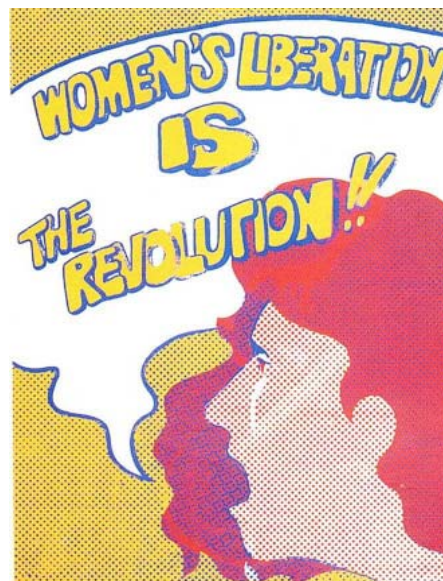
Groups have started off well in the New Year. Drumming members report that they are having a lot of fun. If you are in the mood for something enlivening but quieter try Mandala making, where you can create your own art to take (or make) at home, and Book Club for a good read together.

Mandala Making has moved to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday morning of the month, the next one being on 18 March. Watch OM for information about upcoming events:

An outstanding speaker this year will be Hugh Mackay, a leading social commentator on Australian society. He will be speaking about current changes and future trends.

Please come along and support the International Women's Day march and/or rally behind the OWN banner.

*Heather Jennings*



## Jessie Street National Women's Library

Lunch-hour talk, 12 to 1.30.

\$22 for non members and \$16 for members covers a sandwich lunch with tea and coffee. Everyone is very welcome and from March we will be back in the Town Hall – a much easier venue to access via public transport.

**18 March:** Aleit Woodward Aleit will talk about her family wanderings round Germany from the time they had to leave Poland when the Russians occupied it at the end of World War II.

## Book Club

What do a group of women do at Book Club? We meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month 12.30pm - 2.30 pm at 87 Lower Fort Street and we discuss the book of the month. We decide, collectively, on the book we wish to explore and share our views.

Fortunately, we do not always agree on our points of view and therefore our debates are lively.

At our last meeting we discussed *The People of the Book* by Geraldine Brooks, which explores the story of a Jewish Haggadah - its secrets and the story of its survival. We explore our books through character, setting, style of writing, plot, point of view and how we feel about the book. We do not stick to these suggestions but use them as launch pads. Could you imagine that a discussion on the book could turn to the idea of Hope and its many guises?

If you enjoy being challenged and would like to join us, our next meeting is Monday 15 March 12.30pm at 87 Lower Fort Street and our book is *Ransom* by David Malouf

*Anne-Marie Kestle*

# OWN Sydney Events



Enjoy the Coolest Botanic Garden in Australia  
Only \$9.00 payable on the day

**8 April, 2010**  
**10.30 for 11am**

## **25 March** **Coach Day Tour** **to Mt Tomah**

*Join OWN Members on an all day trip to one of the highest points of the splendid Blue Mountains, the 28 hectare Mt Tomah Botanic Gardens of cool weather plants.*

**Includes guided bus tour 1 – 2 pm**

At 1000 metres above sea level this glorious garden of exotic cool weather Australian plants has landscaped pools, winding walks, mountain top views  
Café/restaurant and shop

**BRING YOUR OWN LUNCH**  
*lots of beautiful spots to picnic*

25 March, 9.30 am – 4.30 pm approx ,  
leaving from and returning to  
87 Lower Fort Street, The Rocks.  
Bookings: 9247 7046

## **HUGH MACKAY**

**Fellow of the Australian Psychological Society, Social Researcher, Novelist, Broadcaster and Columnist, Hugh has made a lifelong study of the attitudes and behaviors of Australians**

*This is something special, you won't want to miss. Hugh talks with OWN members, and discusses issues about our society and its future.*

**“Questions you have always wanted to ask about our society and its future”**

Please ring **9247 7046** to book your place for this popular speaker, and for catering purposes.

Hugh Mackay's books include: *Advance Australia - Where?, Ways of Escape, Turning Point, Why Don't People Listen?, Little Lies, The Spin, Right & Wrong, Generations, Media Mania* and others.

# No Place Like Home?

## Down and Out for the Count

Tuesday morning, 3:45am. I sat in the Cana Café, Pitt St Redfern, drinking coffee and eating a bacon and egg roll. The champagne breakfast was for the volunteers and workers in the City of Sydney Street Count, and I was really impressed by the fabulous service from the volunteers who run the café. I had to fill in time, because the first bus home to Leichhardt was not until 5:25am from Central.

The Street Count itself? I was told “the numbers are down”, “it’s very quiet”. For where I went, Pyrmont Point, “quiet” was an understatement. Advisor, Helen, and I walked all over our part of the city, down the deathly quiet caverns between the townhouses and units of Pyrmont. Not a sound, except for our footsteps. Not a movement, but for our own. No people except for us and a couple walking through the park. Certainly no sign of homeless persons, not in that part of town. They prefer quiet spots, and maybe Pyrmont at night was too quiet; maybe they prefer some sign of life, even if in the distance. I could understand why no homeless person made their home there; it was disturbingly creepy between 1:00 and 3:00 am.

The city is divided into small areas, each a good size for two ‘counters’ to cover in two hours. Many of them have ‘hot spots’, where you will see large numbers of ‘rough sleepers’ – places like Hyde Park, Central Station, Belmore Park and Martin Place – so some of those places recorded many homeless people. At 3:00 am we returned to either Sydney or Redfern Town Hall to record the results and sign in. They don’t like to lose volunteers.

Who were we walking the streets of Sydney between 1am and 3am that Tuesday morning? Advisors, who are currently, or were previously, homeless and volunteers: seniors, students, and other citizens, City of Sydney

employees, social workers and such. I suppose the common factor among us was our concern for the homeless.

The results will be collated and reported in a few weeks, to be used in advocacy, with various governments. The numbers of homeless reflect the inadequate supply of state housing, the high cost of rentals, and numbers of people with incomes inadequate to pay those rentals.

I had tried to sleep on Monday afternoon, before the Street Count, without success. We didn’t finish the counting and recording until 3:30am. I caught the 5:25am bus and got home about 6:00 Tuesday morning. I went to gym in the morning and mahjong in the afternoon. By the time I got to bed on Tuesday night I was “down and out for the count”!

*Lorraine Inglis*

## Invitation to OWN SYDNEY members and friends

### Getting older, ‘Home’ – Now and in the Future

As we age some of us are facing housing insecurity:

- Are you an ageing home owner, house too big? Need or want something different?
- An older renter and rents rising?
- Retiring and don’t have a decent nest-egg for your housing?
- Living with family, can’t find affordable accommodation?
- Caravan renter?
- Homeless?

OWN NSW is asking some of its groups to support its Home Sweet Home Survey by arranging for their members to participate in a focus group and having a say.

The number of older women now facing housing pressures is rising and the need for governments to plan for appropriate and affordable accommodation must be addressed. You could have some views and be willing to share them with us. Confidentiality will be observed.

The survey is part of the work of OWN NSW’s Prevention of Violence Against Older Women Project which is now researching homelessness issues of older women. The survey results will be included with other material to be taken up with State and Federal Governments and the aged sector.

Members of OWN Sydney are invited to a discussion

**10am, Monday 15 March at OWN,**

87 Lower Fort Street, Millers Point.

For enquiries please call Sonia 9519 3137



# The World as a Village



If you thought of the world as a village consisting of 100 people, maintaining the proportions of all the people living on earth, that village would consist of:

57 Asians, 21 Europeans, 14 Americans (north, central and south), 8 Africans.

There would be: 52 woman and 48 men; 30 Caucasians, 70 non-Caucasians; 30 Christians, 70 non-Christians; 89 heterosexuals, 11 homosexuals.

6 people would possess 59% of the wealth, and they would all come from the USA

80% would live in poverty

70% would be illiterate,

50% would suffer from hunger and malnutrition

1% would be dying

1% would be being born

1% would own a computer

1% (yes, only 1%) would have a university degree.

If you currently have money in the bank, in your wallet and a few coins in your purse, you are one of the 8 privileged few in the village.

If we looked at the world this way, the need for acceptance and understanding would be obvious by moving to a global perspective:

If you woke up this morning in good health, you have more luck than 1 million people who will not live through the week.

If you have never experienced the horror of war, the solitude of prison, the pain of torture, were not close to death from starvation, then you are better off than 5 hundred million people

If you can go to your place of worship without fear that someone will assault or kill you, then you are luckier than 3 billion people

If you have a full fridge, clothes on your back, a roof over your head and a place to sleep, you are wealthier than 75% of the world's population.

And so: **Work** like you don't need the money, **Love** like nobody has ever hurt you, **Dance** like nobody is watching, **Sing** like nobody is listening, **Live** as if this were paradise on earth.

*From the internet*

## Clean hands save lives

This is a campaign that is world-wide, and NSW Health is very active in developing it in hospitals. It's catching on in the community.

'Hospital patients are generally unwell, recovering from an operation, or they may have decreased immunity leaving them at increased risk of infection from germs.' (NSW Department of Health pamphlet).

One of the easiest and most effective ways to reduce infection is for patients, visitors and staff to practise good hand hygiene. This means washing using either alcohol-based hand rubs or soap-and-water to help stop the spread of germs.

The NSW Department of Health is carrying out this campaign because they know that this is one of the easiest ways to help keep patients as safe and healthy as possible.

Staff should clean their hands 'at each contact' or, put more simply, before and after touching each patient. Visitors and patients are being asked to join staff in this fight against infection by achieving the best hand hygiene possible.

Visitors should clean their hands each time they enter or leave a patient's room. Alcohol-based hand rubs significantly reduce the number of germs on the skin, are fast-acting and can cause less skin irritation than frequent use of soap and water.

Hospitals are now placing alcohol-based hand rubs at every bed and at entrances. If patients are in any doubt as to whether a doctor, nurse or any health care staff has cleaned their hands before and after touching them, they should ask them, "Did you wash your hands?" 'It's OK to ask' says the NSW Department of Health pamphlet.

When talking about alcohol-based hand rub recently at meetings of OWN, many of us took small bottles from our handbags. The community is taking notice.

*Betty Johnson*

# Forums and Festivals

## A Festival, A Conference, A Future

The first feminist conference to be held in Sydney for nearly 20 years will be on 10 and 11 April, 2010. It is being run by a collective of women who have come together to enliven and ignite the Sydney feminist movement. We are planning two days of lively debate, workshops and discussion about where we're from, where we're at and where we're going.

We are a dynamic and diverse group of women including teachers, students, writers, artists, activists, social workers and journalists. We include representatives from the Women's Electoral Lobby NSW, Amnesty International, The Feminist Bookshop, the AIDS Council of NSW, Sydney University Students Representative Council and the Australian Services Union. Our diversity means that we are able to bring together women from all over Sydney, of all ages, ethnicities and backgrounds.

To help build awareness of the conference we have started a blog, which has information about the conference and the opportunity for people to discuss a range of issues in the lead up to the conference.

<http://www.feministconference.blogspot.com/>

Your support in this matter would be greatly appreciated. If you have any questions about this please don't hesitate to contact me.

Laura Maclean

0423 646 568

[laura@mediaheads.com.au](mailto:laura@mediaheads.com.au)

## UNIFEM Australia Sydney IWD Breakfast

**When:** Friday, 5 March 2010:  
7 AM - 8:50 AM

**Where:** Bayside Grand Hall,  
Sydney Convention Centre,  
Darling Harbour

**Guest Speaker:** Dr. Rose  
Evaster-Aderolili

**MC:** Geraldine Doogue

Cost: \$60 – \$45

[www.internationalwomensday.org.au](http://www.internationalwomensday.org.au)  
call 0415 972 281.

## 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.**

## Older Women Ageing Safely in NSW Forum, April 29, Petersham Town Hall

The OWN NSW Forum is an important step in the OWN campaign to prevent violence against older women and to influence adoption of the strategies outlined in OWN NSW report *The Disappearing Age*.

While we hope that the Forum will be attended by a range of service providers and Ministerial advisors, good representation by OWN members will contribute greatly to the Forums success.

The Agenda includes reports on the progress and pitfall encountered since the launch of the Disappearing Age Report, experiences in the UK by Bridget Penhale from the University of Sheffield, and from Minister Tebbutt, Minister for Health, and Minister McKay, Minister for Women.

The Forum Flyer and Registration Form are included in this Newsletter. The agenda will be finalised later in February. A small registration fee is required as there is no funding for the Forum.

Please contact me if you have any queries. Sonia Laverty  
(Ph 9519 3137)

Convener, OWN NSW PVAOW Working Party  
Prevention of Violence Against Older Women

# 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, 2011 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

### Wellness on Wednesdays

9.30am-11.45am every Wednesday

Held in Mott Hall, Argyle St., Millers Point. Classes for 2010 have resumed!

### Lost Ladies

10.00am every Wednesday during school terms, exploring various locations or topics of interest. **10 March - 10am MOS for Martin Sharp exhibit.** contact Annette for 2010 program on 9665 5369.

### Film Discussion group

You are invited to join **Tuesday 9 March**, to see *short films directed by women screened at Parliament House.*

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 11.00am on the last Friday of every month for an informal get together. Enter from 2 Bronte Road, Bondi Junction. Contact Yetty on **9665 2050** to check March details.

Book Club on 15 February 1-3 pm at 87 Lower Fort Street.

This month's book is *Ransom* by David Malouf, next month: *Too Much Happiness* by Alice Munro.

Contact Anne-Marie Kestle: 9622 0717

Drumming 11.30 - 12.30pm Wednesdays, Mott Hall, Argyle St. Millers Point. Drums and gourds are provided. If you would like to drum please leave your name at OWN, ph 9247 7046.

Mandala Making with Sheila Bartlett. 3rd Thursday of the month, 10am to 12. At 87 Lower Fort Street, Millers Point. Cost \$4. Bring unlined paper and whatever medium you like: watercolours, crayons, pencils etc. ph 9247 7046.

### Saturday Social Group at Birkenhead Point

We meet at 10.30 a.m. - 12.00 noon on alternate Saturdays for coffee and conversation at the Birkenhead Café, on the first floor level of the Birkenhead Point Shopping Complex overlooking Parramatta River. The next meeting will be Saturday 13 March. Contact Nora Huppert on 9181 3918 or Bev Cameron on 9957 5367 for details.

## OWN History Project has started!

How did we start? Who were the women with that drive? What were we aiming at? Who funded us?

What can you tell us about our beginnings?

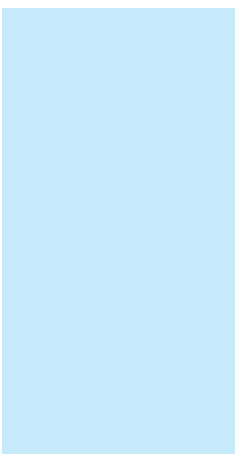
When did you join? What drew you in? Who did you meet? What made you stay? How did OWN change your world? How did you change OWN? How did you work with OWN to change the world?

We also need the help of women who have skills at interviewing.

Call the OWN NSW office on **9247 7046** and register your interest.

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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