



OWN MATTERS

Newsletter of the Older Women's Network New South Wales

Vol.7 No.7 – August 2010

Write to Vote

CONTENTS

Write to Vote	1 & 3
What Women Want	2
What Women Want- Contacts	3
Aboriginal Support Circle Issues	4-5
The State's First People	4
NSW Aboriginal Trust Fund	4
NAIDOC NSW Unsung Heroes 2010 ...	4-5
Integrity of QLD Police slammed	5
OWN Matters Direct Contact	5
OWN Office	5
The Saga of Separated Socks	6
Shoes Wanted	6
Letters to the Editor	6-7
Little to choose from	6-7
It never rains... ..	7
Hmm	7
Cheap eats	7
Power Saving	7
Spicy Chicken and Pasta	7
Vivid Experience	8
Bus Stories	8
Get those pensioners out there spending	9
Lake Eyre by public transport	9-10
An adventure with Grandma	10-11
A Little Ray of Sunshine	11
The Beach	12
Jessie Street 21st Annual Luncheon	12
The OWN History Project	13
At and Beyond the Rocks	14
Sydney	14
OWN Sydney AGM Notice	14
Lost Ladies	14
Theatre Group Report	15
Centre Stage	15
Female Kabuki	15
Review: I Remember, I Remember	16
A sort of Education	16-17
Freecycle	17
Shopping and Politics	17
I'm Still Crying	18
A Massacre is not a Massacre	18
Question Time in the House	19
LawAccess	19
How Could They?	20
Safe as Houses side A	21
Safe as Houses side B	22
OWN Sydney Notices	23

Having just had a vibrant OWN NSW State Conference, one of the things that really got women talking was their desire to see action in their local communities, and their willingness to be vocal about the lack of progress made on issues of real concern to older women. The lesson was don't wait until after the election, and candidates are installed to make your needs known. The conference workshop: *What Women Want*, conducted by OWN Sydney's Judith Daley, and OWN Illawarra's Barbara Malcolm was a tremendous success, and we've published the list of demands in this month's *Point of View* in the hope of inspiring you to take that next step, by inundating your candidates and insisting they commit publically one way or another in order to allow older women to decide where their vote is best placed.

While that group of stirrers was plotting with politics, another group was delving into the dangerous and sometimes murky waters of our rights, both human and elder. Liz Snell from Women's Legal Resources Centre together with Margaret Small from the Older Persons' Legal Service at The Aged-care Rights Service, led a very informative session where participants explored the various areas and mechanisms which exist to protect and assert their rights. This work built on issues raised earlier by our keynote speaker, Alison Peters, Director NCOSS Council of social services NSW. Alison said more needed to be done to raise the awareness of gender as a significant issue in ageing, because of the economic, social, health and financial implications that this difference embodies across a lifetime. Alison felt that although we had some fabulous role models for women, by having the Prime Minister, Premier, Governor General, Governor, and the mayor for example, these positions did not necessarily have comparable gains in the workplace for most women. As well as revisiting the statistics to support the reality that poverty in old age is a very real possibility for most women, now and in the future, Alison illustrated that perhaps part of the problem lies in the conceptual lag that surrounds the language to do with ageing itself. She pointed out that cultures all over the world have words to describe the many and varied stages of infancy through to adulthood, a period of just 18 years, but there were few terms that usefully described the different stages of ageing that covered the remainder of our lives, particularly once we pass middle age. Government departments consider 'older' to begin at 45, if the average non-indigenous woman lives to 83, that's nearly 40 undifferentiated years of very different stages, and needs, where one is simply grouped together as 'older'. Again we should devise the language to describe our experience, before we become too 'frellderly' (frail + elderly) to write!

For women who just couldn't take it anymore and felt like thumping something, and those peaceful souls who simply wanted to connect with their inner rhythms, Liz Ireland had a perfect solution, leading a workshop in African Drumming! For those of us who missed out, we got tap our toes, clap our hands and shimmy to Barbara Malcolm's Heartbeats from Wollondilly, while a medley of groups photos from the past year flashed behind in an epic slideshow of talent.

continues page 3

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

Phone: 02 9247 7046 Fax: 02 9247 4202 email: info@ownnsw.org.au web:www.ownnsw.org.au

Produced with the assistance of the Office of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, Department of Human Services NSW

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

POINT of VIEW

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 email or mail marked Attention – Editorial Team. Please include contact details. Contributions must be received by the second Tuesday of each month.

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

ABN 36 992 030 904

Editorial Team

Beth Eldridge, June West, Lorraine Inglis, Helen Young and Louise Bentley.

Admin Support

Margaret Holland and Margaret Kearney, Helen Monaghan.

Layout and Design

Beth Eldridge, Louise Bentley, Enid Leighton and Marilyn McGreal.

Membership & Subscriptions

Maureen King

Mailout Team

Pat Rayne, Noel Carpenter, Veronica Willis, Heather Jennings, Corinne Campbell. More help welcome!

What Women Want!

The motions below were passed after very lively discussion at the 'What Women Want' Workshop held on 20 July 2010 at the OWN-NSW Annual Conference.

Members of OWN can feel free to write to their local federal member, the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, any other party that takes their interest, and/or the head of the relevant federal government department (because the government is in caretaker mode) to make them aware of these views by OWN.

The final issues can be raised with the Press Council of Australia and with the Media and Arts Alliance

CLIMATE CHANGE

Members are angry that nothing substantial is being done about climate change. We recognise that climate change impacts on every single thing we do every single day. We demand immediate action at every level of society.

MANDATORY INCOME MANAGEMENT

We strongly object to the implementation of mandatory income management. It is a fundamental breach of human rights.

SINGLE AGED PENSION

The single aged pension continues to be inadequate especially for women for whom this is their only income.

MEDICARE

We demand that Medicare be retained and strengthened. We want fundamental improvement in all levels of health care including dental health and psychiatric health.

PHARMECUTICAL BENEFITS SCHEME

We demand that the PBS be retained and improved and quarantined from any International Trade Agreements.

RIGHTS OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

We recognise the basic human rights of refugees and asylum seekers and we want the demonising of them by media and politicians to stop immediately.

MEDIA STANDARDS AND MANIPULATION OF ISSUES

We deplore the poor standards demonstrated by the media especially with respect to issues such as: refugees and asylum seekers, the forthcoming federal election, the super tax and climate change.

Notes by Judith Daley

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.*

Write to Vote

Speaking of talent, we were all delighted to see the OWN NSW Theatre Group's new show – *Don't Knock Your Granny*, directed by Jo-Anne Cahill. Their innovative use of puppets and performance to deal with such a difficult subject, was clever, and the material was performed with sensitivity and skill – brilliant!

One of these fabulous performers – Veronica Willis - was also doubling as a magnificent stage and operations manager for the conference. Thanks to Veronica, and a team of energetic behind the scenes volunteers, women were catered for in every sense. This team included:

Mercedes Wijangco, Margaret Kearney, Evelyn White, Kit Cheung, Mary Bentley, Judith Daley, Barbara Malcolm, Marilyn McGreal as well as all those trusty OWN women who lent a hand at the last minute, and of course the fabulous Conference Committee listed below.

The whole day was masterfully MC'd by Cate Turner, and thanks to our superbly coordinated Conference Committee: Anne Dever, Jo Allon, Leonie Higgins and Morgana Oliver-Ayers the day and the weather was perfect!

If only OWN ran the world...

Beth Eldridge

What Women Want - Contacts

Note that most Ministers now have a contact email link via their computer/online Parliament site. This means you have to link to that site via www.aph.gov.au.

Climate Change

Penny Wong Minister : Senator : email : on line contact form

Canberra: ph 02 6277-7920

Local electorate : level 4

19 Gougar St Adelaide SA

Ph 08-8212-8272

Mandatory Income Management

Jenny Macklin Minister for Families , Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs email: on line contact form

Canberra: ph 02 6277-7560

Local electorate: 149 Burgundy Street

Heidelberg Victoria

03- 9459-1411

Minister for Social inclusion

Simon Crean email : S.Crean.MP@aph.gov.au

Canberra ph 02 6277 7320

Local electorate 401 Clayton Rd

Clayton 3168 Victoria

Ph 03 9545 6211

Minister for Indigenous Health

Warren Snowdon email: Warren.Snowdon.MP@aph.gov.au

Canberra ph 02 6277-7380

local electorate Alice Springs

P.O.Box 4007

Alice Springs NT 0871

ph 08 8952 9696

Darwin

G.P.O. Box 1596

Darwin NT 0801

ph 08 8942 3830

Single Aged Pension

Medicare

Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme

Minister for Health, Minister for Aging

Nicola Roxon email : Nicola.Roxon.MP@aph.gov.au

Canberra ph 02 6277-7220

Local electorate : 1 Thomas St

Maribyrnong 3032 Victoria

Ph 03 9317 7077

Minister for Housing, Minister for Status of Women

Tanya Plibersek email : online contact form

Canberra ph 02 6277-7780

Local electorate 150 Broadway

Broadway 2007 NSW

Ph 02 9379 0700

Rights of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Minister for Immigration and Citizenship

Christopher Evans email : online contact form

Canberra : ph 02 6277- 7860

local electorate:

51 Ord St

West Perth

Western Australia 6005

ph 08 9481 4844

Media Standards

Minister for Communications

Stephen Conroy email : senator.conroy@aph.gov.au

local electorate :

suite 1b, 49 High St

Epping Victoria 3076

mail address: P.O. Box 1067

Epping MDC Vic 3076

ph 03 9408 0190

Aboriginal Support Circle Issues

The State's First People

Australian Lawyers for Human Rights (ALHR) has congratulated the NSW Government for its proposal to formally recognise Aboriginal people as the state's first people in the State Constitution. The Victorian Constitution was amended in 2004, Queensland's in 2010.

A two-month period of public comment has begun on the proposed wording of an amendment of the preamble. The ALHR is urging the NSW government to support the symbolic recognition with practical outcomes addressing Aboriginal disadvantage across the State.

NSW Aboriginal Trust Fund Repayment Scheme

Applications under this Scheme, established to repay money that was withheld from Aboriginal people and placed into trust fund accounts controlled by Government Agencies over a period of 70 years, was originally due to close at the end of June 2010. It has been extended for a further six months, as there are still thousands of unprocessed claims. The money, referred to as Stolen Wages, includes wages, pensions, child endowment payments and other entitlements.

Established as "evidence-based", there must be strong and reliable evidence showing that money is owed from a Government trust fund account. Where evidence is ambiguous or unclear claimants have the right to present additional evidence, including an affidavit or oral evidence. The problem is that most claimants don't have recollections because they were never told of the existence of their trust fund. It was only agencies responsible for collecting and withholding those monies that were aware of the full extent of the practice. Descendant claimants in particular have little, if any, knowledge of unpaid trust monies owed to a deceased relative.

The Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) provides *pro bono* legal advice and support in relation to these claims through

its Stolen Wages Referral Scheme. Claimants need to access historical government records. But even when applications are made to access these records, waiting times could be upwards of 12 months - too late for the deadline. Incomplete or damaged records can be detrimental to a claim.

The PIAC has lobbied the NSW government to make a complete copy of records available to claimants, but has had no luck so far. It has launched a free, confidential telephone information service at 88986544 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Given the poor state of the records, the PIAC believes the scheme should give greater weight to other available evidence such as oral testimony or corroborative statements.

Pat Zinn

NAIDOC NSW Unsung Heroes 2010

At the 2010 National NAIDOC Ball in Melbourne, three well-known NSW people received recognition - Aunty Ali Golding (Female Elder of the Year), Uncle Lester Bostock (Joint Male Elder of the Year) and Megan Davis (Scholar of the Year).

Aunty Ali, Biripi woman, lived on the Block in Redfern for many years and has made important contributions to many national and international forums, including the World Spirit Healing Conference in Canada, International Woman's Day events in Parliament, the NSW Reconciliation Council and ANTaR. She is the Women's Reconciliation Network's cultural mentor and in 2004 she graduated from Nungaliya College in Darwin with a diploma of Theology.

Bundjalung man, Uncle Lester Bostock, was part of the 1967 referendum campaign and the Aboriginal Tent Embassy. Having to leave school at just 13, he returned to studies as an adult and became a teacher. He has worked to raise awareness of the



Aboriginal Support Circle Issues

unmet needs of Aboriginal people with disabilities, after losing a leg in an accident in the 1950s, and is regarded as a pioneer of Indigenous media in Australia.

Although from Warra country in Southern Queensland, Megan Davis is Director of the Indigenous Law Centre at the University of NSW and is a leading scholar on Indigenous legal rights. She heads a team conducting ground-breaking research into violence against women and children and is the first Aboriginal woman to be appointed to a permanent United Nations Forum. Among many achievements is her participation in drafting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Congratulations to all!

Pat Zinn

Integrity of Queensland Police Service Slammed

Last month I reported on the coroner's scathing findings that police officers had colluded to protect one of their own, Senior Sergeant Chris Hurley, in the death of Mulrunji Doomagee's death on Palm Island in 2004.

The Crime and Misconduct Commission, headed by retired Judge Martin Moynihan, has acknowledged that a systemic problem within the Queensland Police Service allowed the investigations into Mr Doomagee's death to become tainted, and therefore flawed. He stated that neither the original police investigation into the death in custody of Mulrunji Doomagee on Palm Island nor the Queensland Police Service revue team acted professionally...this lack of professionalism and substandard actions of those officers impacted badly on Palm Island's tragic history and its people. Queensland Police Commissioner, Bob Atkinson, has been required to report back on what action he intends to take against the officers involved.

In fact, the report should already have been received.

Aboriginal leaders have condemned Bob Atkinson over his handling of the affair, saying that justice would be served only when criminal charges were laid and fundamental changes made to the culture of the Queensland Police Service.

Pat Zinn

OWN Office

The phone hours at our OWN office are from 10:00 to 3:00.

If you call outside these hours you may get a recorded message. Please don't think that what you have to say is unimportant to us. Leave a message, with your contact number, and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Between 10:00 and 3:00 the phone will be answered by one of our friendly volunteers.



OWN Matters Direct Contact!

We love to hear from you and publish what you have to say in our newsletter.

The best way, for you and us, is for you to email your letter or article.

We have an email address, especially for your contributions.

The email address is newsletter@ownsw.org.au

Shoes 'n Socks

The Saga of Separated Socks

Washing day – or so I decided on a clear morning before the ‘showers developing’ forecast spoilt my plan. Because of the recent rainy weather a lot has accumulated that needed a good wash. I hastily load the washing machine. When I hang up the things, something is amiss. Only one of my favourite white socks is present. It looks forlorn. “What happened to my partner?” it seems to be asking. That’s what I would like to know too, since wearing one without the other would look odd.

Later on, when I go to my bedroom, there it is on the floor. It seems to have an accusing look. “Why did you separate us! Without my partner my life has no meaning.” “Yes, I understand, but we have a dilemma. I can’t let you, in your soiled state, contaminate your brightly sparkling partner. I profusely apologise for that.”

At night I can’t get to sleep. The accusing look of Soiled Sock invades my peace of mind. Then I get a bright idea. I can’t wait till the morning. I clamber out of my cosy bed and hand wash Soiled Sock. Now it also becomes Clean Sock and can be reunited with its loving partner. I have regained my peace of mind, and hope that they have too.

Trudy Davis

Shoes Wanted

Do you have some pre-loved shoes to send to Africa or Nepal? If so TAFE Colleges are collecting **pre-loved/gently worn shoes for children and adults** in poor regions of Africa and Nepal. Thirty million children have never owned a pair of shoes, though many live in urban areas and suffer foot injuries. Wearing shoes to an interview can also help people find employment. A pair of quality shoes (hardly worn) costs 2-3 month’s savings to a poor person. Add a pair of socks if you wish. Can you help?

When? From now to the end of 2010.

Where? Drop the shoes at the Main Office of Student Association of any TAFE. in Northern Sydney: Crows Nest TAFE: 149 West Street, Crows Nest NSW or North Sydney TAFE: 213 Pacific Hwy, St Leonards NSW

Info? www.studentassociations.info/wordlysoles or phone 0409 711 107 or, you could post some shoes to College Association – North Sydney TAFE, 213 Pacific Highway, St Leonards, NSW, 2065.

Australia Post ships up to 20kg boxes for around \$8 anywhere in Sydney. That’s a lot of shoes.

Maureen King

Letters to the Editor



Little to Choose From

What do I think of the new P.M? Not much.

When Kevin Rudd was elected I was delighted that we had gotten rid of that weasel, John Howard. I did not stay delighted for long. I am one of those who have been calling the former Prime Minister ‘Rudd the Dud’, because I have not been impressed by some of the decisions taken; continuing with Howard’s racially discriminatory Intervention, deciding to keep out some ‘illegal Immigrants’ based on their country of origin, putting into place an income quarantine law discriminating against all welfare recipients in Australia, to focus on just a few.

Julia Gillard was there while these decisions were taken, and there is no way she has not been party to the decisions. So she, too, went along with decisions that are anathema to me, decisions driven by newspaper polls, decisions that discriminated against the poor and the dispossessed. She had no trouble accepting, defending and passing these laws. She is not a person who has different views to the ‘dud’; after all she is one of the inner group which decided on the legislation.

So what are we getting in Julia Guillard? We are probably avoiding Tony Abbot, and that is a b***y good thing. We get a female Prime Minister with very discriminatory principles, instead of a Prime Minister who has very discriminatory principles about females.

Does that put us ahead? Not by much. After all Julia Guillard agreed with laws that discriminate against the indigenous, the immigrant, the poor: the fact is that more women are affected by those laws than men. And Tony Abbot did not object to those laws either, so he would give us no joy.

Tony Abbot would, however, bring back Work Choices with all its discriminatory labour policies. At least Julia Guillard did repeal some of the worst excesses of

Letters to the Editor

Work Choices. Not all that were promised, but some.

So what do I think about our new P.M? She is a good parliamentary performer, true. But that only means she is good on her feet, a good talker. To get to being leader of the Labour party. she has done some good deals. I am not convinced that she will also do good deeds. Should I rejoice in the gender of the person who discriminates against those least able to deal with the discrimination? Should I rejoice in us having such a person as Prime Minister of Australia?

The fact is, there is little to choose from on either side of the House.

Lorraine Inglis

It never rains...

“A 66-year-old Japanese woman has been arrested for hitting a student on a bus.

Tamiko Masuta was arrested after assaulting the teen with her umbrella and reportedly breaking his nose.

According to witnesses, Masuta flew into a rage when the student declined to stand up and offer his place, a designated “silver seat” reserved for elderly passengers.”

I urge you to pursue peaceful protest. Remind them that in NSW students are obliged to give up seats to all adults and disabled passengers as part of their conditions of concession travel. Disobeying these rules may lead to the withdrawal of school bus travel passes and/or prosecution. If you don't get anywhere raise it with the driver. Your umbrella or walking stick is best used for emphasis and support, or – if it all goes pear shaped – you can argue self defense!

Morgana

Hmmm

Hmmm! It's become *The OWN Women's Weekly* now has it? Make-up and fashion tips next, I suppose. PULLLEEESE — No more recipes.

Anonymous

[We don't usually publish anonymous letters, but do so this time to illustrate that we are open to criticism. In the light of the approving letters and the avalanche of recipes we have received, we assume that our anonymous critic does not represent all our readers, so we'll continue to publish contributed budget recipes in the Top Tucker segment for the time being. Ed.]

Cheap eats

What a good idea! Swapping budget recipes not only helps moneywise, but it's nice to have a variation on one's usual fare. I hope my trusty version of Impossible Pie will hit the spot.

Dorothy Cox

Power saving

I like the idea of networking budget recipes, since mutual support is what OWN is all about. I made the curry version of Helen's microwave meat loaf and it was delicious. It also saved on electricity, another bill we all dread – 27 minutes in the microwave uses a lot less power than the hour it takes for a meat loaf to cook in the oven.

I hope readers will enjoy my Maltese mother's Mediterranean Chicken.

Lina Clayton

Top Tucker for Tough Times

Spicy Chicken and Pasta

\$8.00

8 chicken drumsticks

chopped onion, carrot, celery, whatever

3 cloves garlic

200g small pasta (shells, elbows are good)

3 tbsp oil

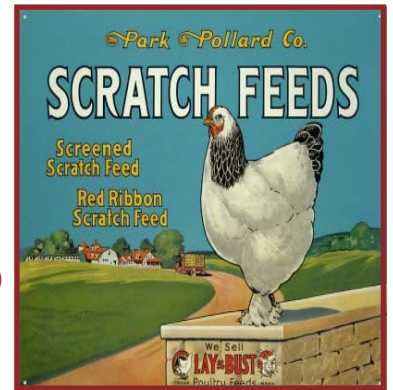
1-2 tbsp sweet chilli sauce

Salt and Pepper

Just cover drumsticks with water, add 1 tsp. salt, vegetables and garlic, bring to boil and simmer for 10 minutes. Remove drumsticks, strip off meat and return bones to stock. Dice chicken meat. Simmer stock a further 40 minutes, cool and refrigerate to set fat. Skim

Bring stock to boil again, remove 3 tbsp. hot stock and mix with oil and chilli sauces to make a topping. Add pasta and cook *al dente*, adding chicken meat 2 minutes before cooking has finished. Strain chicken and pasta (retaining stock for a future soup) and pile into bowls. Drizzle with topping.

Mona Wacker



Vivid Experience

It takes a very special event to prise my Devoted Spouse (DS) and me out of the cosy comfort of home and into a chilly winter's night. But when my son, a street entertainer among other things, and whom I don't see often, told me he would be working in the 'Vivid Lights: Macquarie Visions' celebrations in the city, that was special enough.

We'd seen TV glimpses of the celebrations but hadn't thought much more about them. We were in for a surprise. At the St James end of Macquarie Street, luminous blue arches spanning the street intimated something of the brilliance and colour still to come. St Mary's Cathedral in the distance and Hyde Park Barracks were colourfully illuminated. Indeed, on the face of the Barracks, and also on the Mint, Parliament House, the Mitchell Library and the Conservatorium, stories commemorating the life and work of Governor Lachlan Macquarie and his wife Elizabeth 200 years ago were all expressed in image, text and best of all, vivid colour.

Families with small children were out enjoying the spectacle and light-hearted, ambience seemed to radiate from the street crowds, despite a chilly breeze. From flagpoles, 'Vivid' banners undulated down Macquarie Street, past the Opera House and around Circular Quay.

We made our way to the Museum of Contemporary Art, to wait for my son. Across the harbour, the Opera House sails beguiled us with huge images of native flora and fauna. Behind the wharves, city skyscrapers were aglow with rainbow colours; people slowed down to watch not only the vivid scenery but the many street entertainers vying with each other to attract the crowd's attention.

Time was passing. DS and I were beginning to feel the wind's chill.

"There they are!" DS exclaimed. From under the Cahill Expressway, two figures drew nearer, seeming to drift above the heads of the crowd. Both were totally encased in black glow-stick-studded body-suits which extended fully to cover their head-high stilts. In the dim light they appeared slim, wraith-like, almost eerie and of another world but, on reaching us, their now visible faces and voices were real.

My son smiled down and introduced his colleague while DS took photos before they drifted away.

In Campbell's Cove we came upon an astonishing pageant called 'Fire and Water,' the story was of Indians sailing from home to Sydney Cove in 1797. Set in the water some distance from the shore, and high above the crowd, was the stage. Brilliant light illuminated the actors, voices were amplified across the entire area, balls of gas-fuelled fire burst up from the water and rhythmic music intensified and unified the exotic mood. At the climax, a brightly lit tall ship, Sydney Cove, sailed in with acrobats and dancers adding to an almost overwhelming confusion of colour and sound.

Now very cold, we warmed ourselves near burning logs held in place with iron fenders, enjoying the familiar scent of burning eucalyptus but when DS began muttering about creaking knees and cranky hips, it was clearly time to go. We had delighted in the 'Vivid' experience and the historic richness of old Sydney Town, but with thoughts of hot chocolate and cosy warmth to come, we were quite ready for the simpler pleasures of home.

Bev Cameron

Bus Stories

Chilled
A windy morn
unites us
as we blow onto the bus
clapping gloved hands
Eyes meet in
chilled exclamation
smiling the freeze
chatting of our
shared winter morn.

Girltalk (with Brussels)
Bright young girls
share their lives
across the aisle
for all to hear
Bring smiles
to our aging faces
remembering youth

Our reverie erupts
as brussel sprouts
spill
down the aisle
like jaffas in
a picture show
We are one as we
laughingly collect
rollicking Brussels

The Broken Seat Bus
I sit, turn, notice
the broken seat back
Exclaim to the
lady behind
I move
Another passenger
same reaction
She moves
from then on
a chorus in rounds
"the seat's broken"
moving us into
shared conversation

Lindley Berrie

Our OWN Tourists

Get those pensioners out there, spending their money!

I've never deluded myself that the NSW Government gave pensioners cheap transport with those \$2.50 Pensioner Excursion Tickets, just to be nice to oldies. The thinking would have been..."Let's get them out there, spending their money." Each pensioner might spend only \$25 in a day out, and maybe only 20 000 pensioners are out each day but pensioners have 365 days each year to get out and about, so much more cash flows into the economy.

I got really excited this week when I thought that I could get around NSW at \$2.50 per ticket. The NSW Government also wants country pensioners going to town and spending their money. Travel outside NSW is 50% of full adult fare. But pensioners can get from one place to another on the NSW Countrylink train and coach network with a Country Pensioner Excursion (CPE) ticket for \$2.50. This means from Griffith to Goulburn, Muswellbrook to Moree, Bourke to Lithgow, costs \$2.50

CPE tickets can't be booked, paid for or used

- north or east of Moss Vale
- east of Lithgow
- south of Muswellbrook
- south of Dungog
- south of Karuah or Booral

This is because Citylink tickets can take you from Sydney to Lithgow, Muswellbrook, Goulburn Newcastle and Nowra. If I were a country pensioner I would buy some Pensioner Excursion Tickets (Citylink) when I was in Sydney, to keep in my wallet. Coming to Sydney I'd buy a \$2.50 CPE ticket to get to one of those places mentioned above. Then I could stay on the train, get to the city, and around the city, using one of the \$2.50 Citylink tickets.

But as a pensioner in the city who wants to travel in the country, I would have to pick up my ticket from the places mentioned above. I tried to book online and I could book an adult fare, I could book a pensioner half fare, but I couldn't book a CPE ticket and I hadn't entered anything except my surname. I would also have to book within a week of the travel date.

The problem for pensioners travelling from the city is that getting a CPE ticket might depend on your concession card. Your pension card gives your address, but your

senior's card doesn't, so maybe that is the way to do it. To find out I might have to try a trip to the North Coast, starting with a Citylink ticket to Newcastle. Or a trip to Albury starting with a Citylink ticket to Goulburn. Or wherever.

Saner women would argue it is easier just to pay the half fare. But what if I could spend a month travelling all around the sights of NSW, \$2.50 per section? Saner women might say, "Why bother?"

Lorraine Inglis



Lake Eyre by public (transport)

The last time Lake Eyre was as full as it is this year was about 30 years ago. If I don't go this year it might be at 95, in a wheelchair. Sonia thought the same thing applied to her and decided to join me. I wanted to go by public transport, so I went on-line, and it was there, all the information I needed, starting with maps. Lake Eyre is in the north of South Australia, a long way from Adelaide with only two road access points, William Creek and Maree.

The Sydney to Adelaide section needed just a phone call to Countrylink. NSW Pensioners can use two of their rail travel vouchers, and go to Adelaide and back on the Indian Pacific for \$80. The train leaves Sydney on a Saturday, arriving in Adelaide on Sunday and returns from Adelaide the following Friday, arriving in Sydney on the Saturday. We can get there and back, no worries, and cheaply.

South Australia doesn't have public transport heading for Lake Eyre, nor to William Creek or Maree. But Greyhound does go to Coober Pedy, leaving Adelaide on Sunday night and arriving Monday morning. To return on

OWN Tourists

the Indian Pacific to Sydney, we have to take the Thursday night Greyhound from Coober Pedy, back to Adelaide. Getting to Coober Pedy and back was easy to organize costing \$130 each way for a pensioner. We are looking at buying neck pillows.

I booked into the backpackers because it had the cheapest single rooms, underground, of course, at \$68 dollars per night. Sonia doesn't do stairs, so she is on the ground floor in the motel section at \$115 per night. She says she will let me visit. We have four days and three nights to see around Coober Pedy, get to William Creek, and see Lake Eyre. William Creek is about 170 km from Coober Pedy. From all accounts, the best way to see Lake Eyre in flood is from the air, with regular flights from William Creek.



The next step to arrange was getting to William Creek, and Lake Eyre. The Coober Pedy website tells you all. That's how I found Wayne, so I emailed him. Wayne transfers passengers from Coober Pedy to William Creek, and back for \$150, minimum two passengers. In answer to my email, Wrightstair said they have various flights over Lake Eyre, the one hour flight costing \$220, and a two hour flight \$350. I rang Wrightsair, booked our flight over Lake Eyre, and Wayne at Arid Areas Tours for the transfer from Coober Pedy to William Creek.

We've bypassed the expensive, and even the moderate and gone for our OWN Independent Senior Women's Tour. It was arranged by email and phone, although we each had to show our pensioner concession cards to get the good prices on rail and Greyhound. For \$80 Indian Pacific, \$260 Greyhound, \$204 backpackers, \$150 transfer, \$220 Lake Eyre flight, allowing \$250 for food, and \$200 for tours, we'll see Lake Eyre and Coober Pedy; \$1364 for me and \$1505 for Sonia. More in the next newsletter.

Lorraine Inglis

Grand Stories

An adventure with Grandma.

My two little granddaughters, aged four and six, were here for a visit and, as all grandmas do, I tried to make the visit a time of joy and a time to learn something. At my place they are encouraged to make their beds and do the dishes, even though the bed looks a bit like a disaster area and the kitchen looks as though a rain storm has been through it when these chores are finished.

They love Grandma's porridge for breakfast so it was my habit, while they were washing up, to put the oats on slow heat to part cook, so that porridge would be cooked in a short time in the morning. Drama often has simple beginnings ...

On the night before they were to go home it was decided that they would stay up till midnight – one of the special things allowed on a visit to grandma. But grandmas can be tricky ...

After the washing up we sat in the lounge room watching the big hand creep to twelve (the fact that the small hand was heading for eight meant nothing to them, since they couldn't tell the time). We giggled at how late it was getting, and 'at eight o'clock' we staggered up the stairs, very tired as we had 'stayed up till midnight!'

Into bed, story read – which concluded when the fairy queen spread lavender water on the tiny fairy's pillow and cast a spell with magic words so the little fairy would have sweet dreams and not have any nightmares. Guess what, Nanny had some lavender water so we put a drop on each pillow, said the magic words and two little heads were given a kiss and they settled down to sleep, sure they would have sweet dreams.

Back downstairs, I turned the air conditioner on for a bit more heat, then settled down to work on my latest quilt.

Looking up I could see a swirl of smoke coming down from the air conditioner vent and rushed to turn it off, but the smoke kept coming. Thinking there was a fire in the ceiling I went upstairs and felt the floor but there was no heat coming from there, yet the smoke was definitely getting thicker. I rang the fire brigade, checked the girls' room again, still no heat or flames from anywhere but plenty of smoke. Two fire crews arrived, also two police cars. About ten very earnest men sprang into action. The first firemen through the door asked if there was anyone else in the house. When I told him the two girls were upstairs asleep, he rushed up to get them, and the next thing I saw was two little angels with eyes as big as saucers being

Grand Stories

carried down the stairs by a huge man. They were happy to see me and I told them he was a good man, not to be frightened.

We were on our way outside when another fireman carried the burning pot of oats past us and deposited it in the front driveway. No flames, just smoke like you wouldn't believe. I could not believe I had checked everything but the stove.

The firemen were very kind. They gave the girls a Trauma Teddy each, then sucked the smoke out of the house and left me to put two sleepy heads back to bed after their second adventure for the night, (the first was when Grandma let them stay up till *midnight*.) They may have had *sweet dreams*, I had a nightmare.

Barbara Malcolm



A Little Ray of Sunshine

The sweeping cane fields, rain forest and balmy weather of Cairns are very familiar to my devoted spouse [DS]. In a recent short visit there we caught up with many members of his large extended family and he was able to recall with them the days of his long-gone Cairns childhood.

Many of those we met are, like us, retired seniors. Much of our conversation with them centred on health issues familiar to seniors. One or two are on their last mile home and several more we 'visited' are already resting in peace.

But among the many relatives was one whose presence and personality shone a little ray of sunshine into our hearts. In sixty short minutes she lifted our spirits from sobering realities to the playfulness, simplicity and optimism of the very young. Mischa - 'I'm five and a half and my birthday is 17th January...' - is all sparkling brown eyes, smiling face and auburn-gold Shirley Temple ringlets. Engaging chatter spilled from her pretty lips as she approached me while I sat with DS and members of this particular branch of his family tree. I soon found myself being drawn into lively conversation concerning the joys of eating muffins, counting on fingers, wearing butterfly tattoos and other issues of burning significance to five and a half year olds.

To my surprise, she voluntarily climbed onto my lap to make the conversation even more personal. Her 18 month old sister, Chloe also climbed up. Mischa, undaunted, tried a new tack. Calling me to join her outside, where two friendly brown Kelpie dogs were waiting to play with their tennis balls, Mischa invited me to look at her new bike. Chloe came out, too, and like little sisters everywhere, was eager to be in whatever might eventuate.

In a matter of minutes, Mischa had persuaded me to race her while she rode her bike. Little Chloe immediately demanded to be placed on her push-tricycle to join in the excitement of the chase. The dogs, dropped the balls at my feet waiting for the fun to start. For the next half hour or so, I chased Mischa on her bike while pushing Chloe on her trike and stooping whenever I could to toss the balls to the dogs. Back and forth I went, laughing, pushing, throwing, chasing and playing. What uncomplicated simple pleasure it was!

Alas, the other adults joined us all too soon as it was time for DS and me to go, when Mischa was overwhelmed with childish disappointment. 'Don't go! Don't go!' she pleaded passionately. Then, a little more realistically, 'Just one more race?' I couldn't resist her.

As we walked to the gate, Mischa clung to me, tugging at my arm. 'I won't let you go! You've got to stay here!' she cried. Totally entranced with such spontaneously offered warmth and desire for more play with me, I could only hug her. 'I've got to go now,' I said, genuinely sad. 'I've had a lovely time and I'll never forget you!'

And indeed, I never will. Unsought moments of joy make precious memories

Bev Cameron

Grand Stories

The Beach

About 100 years ago my grandfather built a holiday house on the banks of the Bellinger River, a couple of miles from its mouth at Urunga, and every January the extended family moved in. It was always simply called *The Beach* ...



It was heaven for kids. *The Beach* had nothing in it you could hurt, no restrictions on wet or sandy feet, total freedom, and it was right on the water's edge among the mangroves. You'd wake to hear the tide slapping softly against the retaining wall, then you'd be dazzled by sunshine on wavelets. Another great day lay ahead.

There was always something to do. We kids had canoes and a rowing boat, our elders had a launch, the river was teeming with fish and the surf and baths were just across the river. We'd yarn to Bobby Tyler, the oyster man, as he opened his oysters, and many found their way into our eager mouths. Bobby's oysters were huge and creamy, from pristine waters – more than 70 years later, I'm salivating as I write about them.

We kids had only one responsibility at *The Beach* – to keep our elders supplied with sand worms for bait. We'd row across the river, walk over the sandhill and there before us was North Beach, a long, deserted sweep of perfect white sand and surf. Being the youngest cousin, it was my job to swing the burley, a bag of stinking fish, in the last of a wave as it receded down the beach. When the sandworms popped their heads up to see what smelled so good, we were on to them. Worm catching is a fine art; we were masters at it.

We got our reward when the launch came in after the family had been out fishing for the day. While the men

filleted the fish out on the jetty, our mothers got the fuel stove going and made a huge basin of batter. Soon they'd be serving up platter after platter of perfectly cooked battered whiting, bream or flathead that had been swimming only a few hours before. Freshly caught fish is a different animal from shop fish – you can still taste the salt water and seaweed and other marine things. They were the best meals I've ever eaten.

We weren't allowed to swim in the river because of sharks, so we'd paddle or row across the river to swim in the baths. Here I created a small drama by jumping to the wet sand from the railing around the top of the baths and breaking my leg. With my leg in plaster, all I could do was read. Then the river flooded and there was two feet of water through the house. While the elders were packing to go back to Bellingen, I was marooned on a big old iron bed with the river six inches below the mattress. My cousins were frequent visitors, paddling their canoes around my bed. When they wanted a read of my comics they tied their canoes to the bedposts and joined me on the bed.

As the river flooded quite often, nobody got over-excited about a house full of water, whereas the interruption to fishing and swimming was regarded as a major catastrophe. After a flood, they'd simply come down from Bellingen and pump water from the river to swill the silt out, air the bedding, and that was that until the next flood

The Beach has long since gone, but it's still accessible. Memory can take me back there any time I like.

Helen Young

Jessie Street National Women's Library

21st Annual Fundraising Lunch

Monday, 20 September 2010: 12 noon for 12.30 pm

Strangers' Dining Room, Parliament House Sydney

Speaker: Ann Sherry AO CEO Carnival Australia – the largest cruise operator in Australia.

Topic: One Woman's Journey — From Country Queensland to the Bridge of the Cruise Shipping Business.

Cost: \$85 members \$90 non members

Contact: JSNWL GPO BOX 2656 Sydney NSW 2001 or Ph. 9571 5359

Email: info@nationalwomenslibrary.org.au

Further information:

www.nationalwomenslibrary.org.au

The OWN History Project

This project took flight after OWN member and author Dorothy Cora led an inspirational workshop at the 2009 National Conference, titled: OWN History Project. Dorothy had just completed her history of the OWN NSW Theatre Group, *Centre Stage*, and the tales she had uncovered in her research, the intrigue, and lives of women who formed and inspired the network, were stories that needed to be captured, recorded and celebrated, while those who made that herstory were still here to share it.

One of the most onerous tasks facing us was tracking down our oldest members and past allies. To do this we had to delve into dusty files, and old boxes, and cross our fingers that women had not moved, or that they had managed to maintain their network of friends from over 20 years ago.

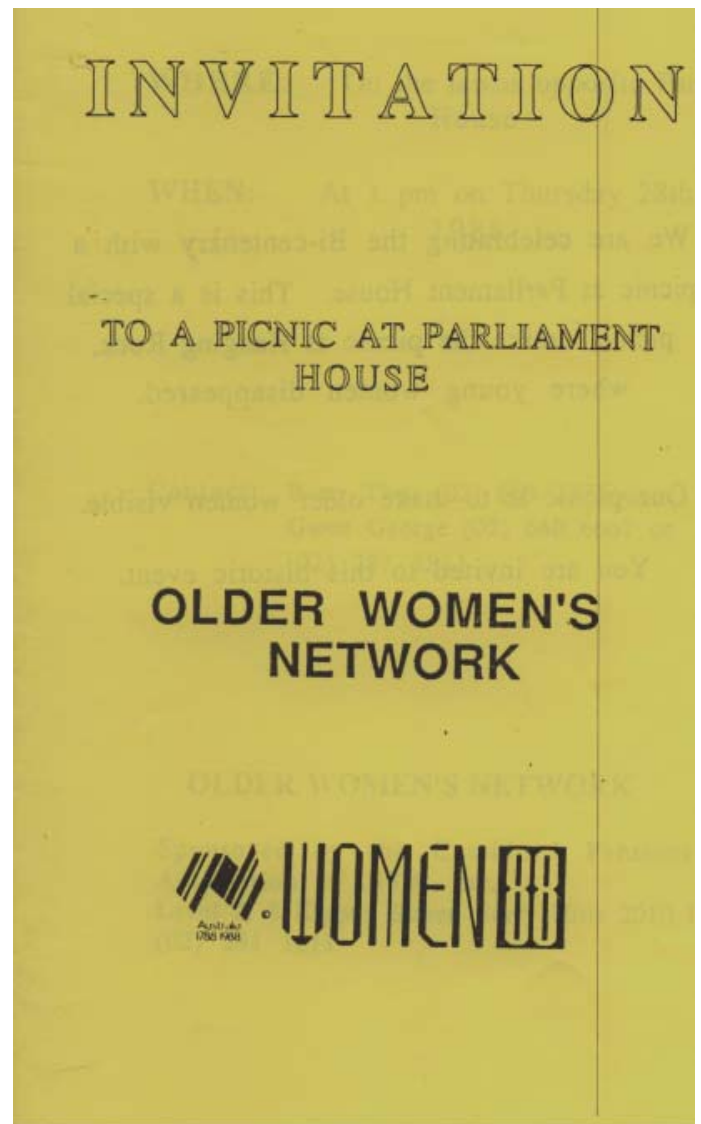
We were lucky enough to have two TAFE student placements in the last 12 months to work on this project, so that the more physically demanding parts of the job of sorting and archiving old records could be achieved more easily. Our first student, Nimi Kathiriya, managed to sort through all these old records, and gave us the information that allowed us to draw up a contact list for the first luncheon, hosted by Renate Watkinson, back in October last year.

From there an OWN History Project Group was established, and members met to decide on strategies for the future direction of the project. It was decided to hold off on requests for project coordination funding, because this would put too great a pressure on the team to produce a text. Given that Dorothy Cora's project had taken years of single-minded (voluntary) dedication, the group felt that the main priority would be to ensure that we began to contact the women involved, and conduct interviews.

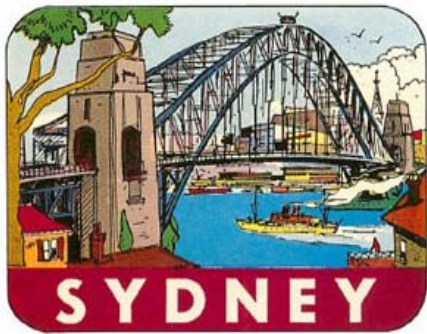
OWN History groups had sprung up around the country as the result of Dorothy's workshop, and there has been information sharing on issues like copyright and release forms, and the format of interviews. The Sydney group are conducting their interview using a couple of digital recorders, donated by a very generous member, and hope to transcribe these using some high tech software!

Our second TAFE student placement, Shikha Sharma, has been researching the social, political and cultural events that gave rise to, and surrounded the formation and early years of the Older Women's Network NSW. Shikha has been greatly assisted in this process by the staff at the Jessie Street Women's Library. The aim of this work is to establish a timeline of events that can be used to consolidate the material gathered from the interviews, and allow us to write a solid history of our organisation and its role in older women's political activism in Australia.

OWN History Project Group



At and Beyond the Rocks



OWN Sydney

Contact People:

Judith Daley: 9181 3249

or 0448 871 188

Joan Modder: 9922 5916

Beverley Cameron:

9957 5367

OWN Sydney's AGM is only days away now. Have you put 20th August in your diary to remind yourself to come and find out what's been going on during the past year? It is also an opportunity to let the Working Group know your views on several proposals that will be put to the meeting. Details of the meeting and of our very special guest speaker appear in this issue of OWN. If you are coming, please call one of the contact people listed above and give us your name, as we do want to make adequate provision for the lunch which will follow the meeting.

OWN Sydney offers its congratulations to all members of OWN NSW's Theatre Group. We hear the Theatre Group was delighted with the success of their efforts on 27/28 June in Nowra where their hosts welcomed them warmly, enjoyed their show and ensured that the team were completely cared for. Clearly, a good time was had by all!

Bev Cameron



OWN Sydney Group

AGM

20 August 2010

The AGM will begin at 10am at OWN premises at 87 Lower Fort Street, Millers Point.

Guest speaker, **Rosie Block**, Curator of Oral History at the State Library of NSW a passionate advocate of oral history..

She will discuss the techniques for conducting oral history interviews that will enhance the enjoyment of both interviewer and subject. Rosie says: "Oral history can be conducted by anyone who is interested in other people and the progress of history – in retrospect."

LOST LADIES

Welcome back all to the reality of some very expensive exhibitions, more flat rates like Museum of Contemporary Art (\$100 per tour) They have had this policy since the beginning of 2009 but had up to now given us special exemption (Da Vinci wanted \$40 above the entry fee to do a tour) and demands for specific numbers. However due to the Moran Portrait Prize and the Blake Prize both being only on for 3 weeks I've given you a longer program. Please try and get to the Mitchell Library under your own steam for the World Press Club photographs closing on 25 July and the day in Australian life photos which closes on 1 August.

Had a fun few days with Aunty Beverly tracing our convict ancestor, Benjamin Perry, who arrived in 1822 (transported for life for robbing a house) and later I traced the Perry family 11 generations back to 1584 in the UK. Benjamin's sister was in the female factory at Parramatta much to Gay Hendriksen's delight as I have baby clothes touring Australia in her "Women Transported" exhibition which has won every prize for best exhibition of the year and tells the story of the female convicts at the various female factories. Sarah Perry was one of the girls chosen as brides from the Parramatta factory and married a fellow convict. (One day to meet, one day to apply for permission and one day to marry but the girls did have the option of refusing)!

4 August 10 AM at Windmill St since we are seeing two exhibitions about women artists I will talk about the specific problems and go over the info in the public address I am giving on 19 Sept at Museum of Sydney.

11 August 10AM foyer of State library of NSW for Moran Portrait prize and Macquarie exhibitions. Free but guided tour not confirmed.

18 August 10AM at Windmill St then to the S.H.Ervin for 11 AM "Slow Burn" an exhibition of paintings from the collection of Eva Brauer (passed away earlier this year). Tour cost \$8.

25 August 10 AM Art Gallery of NSW see 'Abstraction' cost \$17
Further details: Annette Butterfield 96655369 abutterfield_852@hotmail.com.

OWN NSW Theatre Group



Theatre Group Older but Wilder

By the time you read this article many of you will have seen our performance at the OWN Annual Conference, which showcased our new show on elder abuse – “Don’t Knock Your Granny” – a marvellous title originated by Brigid Sen, a long time member of the group. After months of writing and rehearsing the show was previewed at Nowra in front of an audience of 120 people, comprising Nowra OWN members and friends and members of the local community.

A grant from The Mercy Foundation allowed the show to be developed and a grant from the Office of Women supported our efforts to take it to a country region in order to provide wider access to its message.

The show was performed at the Uniting Church Wesley Hall and the feedback was very positive. They thought the message was very apt, and in some cases supported their own experiences and those of other friends and community members. Nowra OWN supplied a delicious afternoon tea, and the experience of going away and performing together is one we will always hold dear.

Thanks to our OWN member, affectionately known as ‘Norma from Nowra’, and her team of helpers for all the organization.

Apart from this gig we also performed at the Ashfield Women Bowlers’ 50th birthday party. Thank you to all the women who paved the way in this sport and who gave us such a rousing reception.

Rita Tratt



Centre Stage

by Dorothy Cora

\$15.00 plus \$7

Available from Older Women’s Network NSW

Ph (02) 9247 7046

admin@ownnsw.org.au

Published in 2009 by the

Older Women’s Network NSW with financial support from the

City of Sydney

Female Kabuki

I recently visited Nagasaki, to pay homage to a peace activist who died on my birthday in 1951. His name was Dr Takashi Nagai, and a museum (Nyokodo) has been established in his honour. Whilst there I met several activists including Keiko, a woman who went to the United Nations in 2005 for a conference on Disarmament,

and who edits for several publications promoting peace.

I commented to Keiko that she had the grace of a dancer and reminded me of the lead character in the Japanese movie *Shall we Dance*, which is so different to the American version starring Richard Gere and Jennifer Lopez. She told me that she had studied ballet for ten years and is currently studying Noh dancing. After several discussions I told her that I was a member of the OWN Theatre Group and we had several animated talks and a small performance from each of us.

Noh dancing goes back to the 14th century and has always been a very serious classical form of dance. Kabuki, by contrast, was much lighter fare and grew out of “shocking dances” performed by an all female troupe led by Okuni of Izumo in 1603. Female performers played both men and women, in comic skits about ordinary life, and their success was such that they even played before the Imperial Palace. Okuni called her act “kabuki”, a name she created from three Chinese characters – song, dance and skits. What a woman!

Alas it had a sad end as it was said that women began attracting the wrong types of audiences and were gaining too much attention from men. In 1629, women were banned from appearing in kabuki performances. It’s all so familiar really but it’s an illustration that women with attitude were really ‘out there’ even then. The Kabuki that visitors to Japan see now is totally different and in my opinion, far less exciting.

Rita Tratt

Recollections

A Review: *I Remember, I Remember*

My name is Maria and I am from a small country in South America called Uruguay. In the late 1960s there was a lot of political unrest and economic problems in the country. In 1970 I decided to emigrate to Australia.

The problems in Uruguay were related to internal divisions and political problems. They were not between countries in the region as in Europe in the First and Second World Wars.

My grandparents emigrated to Uruguay from Italy, after World War I, in the 1920s. They told me about the divisions and problems in Europe. However, growing up in Uruguay it all seemed so far away. It was not until I arrived in Australia that I began to read about what happened during the two World Wars.

This year I decided to volunteer for OWN and began to go into the office at Millers Point in Sydney. It was there that I began to read a wonderful and inspiring book about men and women's experiences during World War II. The book called *I Remember, I Remember - Young people's memories of World War II* includes the experiences of men and women who now live in communities based around the South Coast of New South Wales.

The members of Nowra OWN were involved, Shoalhaven City Council and the Office of Ageing, Disability and Home Care provided financial and other support for the project. OWN published the book. And there were many others who provided support and advice for its development.

The stories and memories described in the book bring that time to life. Especially for someone who is from a part of the world which was not directly involved in it. It becomes real and not something that is fiction. It describes the life experience of that time which has shaped so many of the contributors' lives. Their lives were shaped by that time in so many ways, including physical, emotional and economic impacts.

Some were children in Europe, some were children of migrants who arrived in Australia before the War, others lived on the South Coast or in Sydney during the War. All have a story to tell.

The book is not only a testament to the contributors but also to their friends and family who are no longer with us. The importance of a book like this is that there is a written document of those who lived through that time. It is important as a record that provides witness accounts of that time.

I feel very fortunate that I was able to experience the wonderful and emotional memories of those people in the Book. I wish to thank you – the contributors - for allowing me and others to become part of your life - of that time when you were children.

Today you celebrate life, freedom and love with people who love and admire you.

Maria Passadore

A sort of education

World War II had not long started when it was time for me to go to high school. Because there was no secondary school in our small town, it meant I would have to go to boarding school. As it was wartime and my parents wanted me as close as possible, a convent boarding school only 50 miles away was chosen as my destiny. It was there that I spent most of the next five years of my life.

Some say that schooldays are the happiest days of one's life ... it didn't work out that way for me. Even at 11 years of age I was affronted by the nuns' joyless, blinkered view of life, their unyielding discipline and, most of all, their intolerance of other people's beliefs. Not to mention the unspeakable food they made us eat. I had already started reading Dickens, and I recognized some of his less attractive scenarios in this establishment. What I didn't realize then was the limitations of the education we were receiving.

The school did achieve high passes in public exams – we had every element of the syllabus pounded into us – but in the main our education went no further than rote learning. Reading a book that wasn't on syllabus was almost a mortal sin; worse, the school had no reference library. The information in our text books was all the knowledge we were going to get. Science (not an obligatory subject in those days) wasn't taught at our school, and one can well understand why. The Biology strand would have posed difficulties ... these were women who counseled us to be *modest in the bath!* We weren't allowed aspirin for menstrual pain; instead we were urged to offer up our pains to God (you can't tell me God is a woman).

Now I've got all that anger off my chest, I'll tell you the positives. I did leave school with some worthwhile education, thanks to two nuns. Sister Mary Martina detected and fostered my love of words; Sister Mary

Recollections

Shopping and Politics

Columbière's steely insistence on competence in Latin grammar revealed the structure and usage of the English language. Their combined efforts gave me the tools with which I later earned a living. Latin was also a tremendous asset in editing for medical and natural history publishers. I bow to the veiled and wimpled ghosts of these two nuns.

And then there was the nuns' choir. On Sunday afternoons, steaming and sweaty from sport, we boarders would pack into the chancel of the convent's beautiful chapel for Benediction, and the nuns would lift their voices. We were awash with the sound of soaring sopranos, rich altos, warm mezzos, the swelling background of a fine organ, the fragrance of flowers and candles and incense, the rustle of elaborately embellished priestly vestments ... all the theatre that the Catholic church does so well. It was probably the nearest I ever got to religion.

When the TV series *Brides of Christ* was aired in 1991 there was wide comment on how strictly the schoolgirls were controlled by the nuns. Codswallop! They even had school dances! We never had such freedom under the iron rule of St Kate's 'Brides'. No wonder we all went wild when we left school ... or we would have, if our fathers hadn't taken over where the nuns left off!

Helen Young

Freecycle

There is a worldwide organisation worth knowing about called 'Freecycle'. The Freecycle Network is a nonprofit movement of people who have items which they give away for free to others in their area.

It's also a great site for finding items you may need. It's just a matter of going to www.freecycle.org, typing in your local area and following the directions. Membership is free and everything posted is free. Items are simply listed as OFFER, WANTED, and TAKEN and I'm sure once you browse the site you'll be as hooked as I am. If you're a bit of a hoarder like me you'll find it easy to give away your 'stuff' knowing it's going to a good home. It makes sense to check out Freecycle first, if there is anything you need, to see whether someone in your area has it on offer for collection.

Marilyn McGreal

In the not too distant past, you went to the local shops or supermarket, did your shopping without thinking too much about what and where the groceries came from and then you went home. These days things are different. Thanks to free trade agreements and the ideology of the free market, a trip to the shops can be a much more political issue.

Do you want to buy a packet of frozen vegetables? Most brands these days source their food for this product in China. Check out the small print on the back of the packet. Australian farmers are excluded. Of course this raises food and other safety issues and concerns about farm workers' rights in China.

Woolworths and others have been sourcing garlic from China for a long time. More recently it has been sourced from Mexico. Why does Woolworths refuse to buy from Australian farmers? Woolworths and Coles have been developing their own brands of food products. These products go on the shelves at the expense of local/domestic brand names and in many cases Australian grown products. Woolworth brand Select jams can be made in Europe, rice from Bangladesh or Pakistan and other food products can be from a range of other countries.

The concerns raised by the changes created by Coles and Woolworths are many. They include the attack on Australian farmers and their incomes and their future. The rights of the citizen/shopper to support the local farming community and have a fair choice in what they buy is another issue. It is also the extraordinary dominance of Coles and Woolworths and their ability to control what we buy and what happens to the farming community of Australia.

We have to make choices where we can, to say no to these trends. Wherever possible try and buy Australian made products and avoid the Coles/Woolworth brands where they are using overseas products. It is also an issue which our politicians are only too happy to ignore whilst including in Free Trade Agreements the ability to bring such products into Australia.

As with many other topics for debate and discussion in the lead up to the next election, this needs to be raised with your local member of Parliament and the different political parties who want your vote. . So write to them, asking what are they going to do on this issue.

Margaret Kearney

Human Rights

I'm Still Crying

Those of you who know me know that I can get angry, and some have heard my voice raised in anger. But none of you have seen me really angry, because then I cry. When I am really angry the tears roll down my face as I express my anger, and I am crying as I write this.

I recently spent a month of my life putting together a photo exhibition called 'Hebron. A City under Siege' which was shown in Leichhardt Town Hall this weekend by the Leichhardt Friends of Hebron (Hebron is a small city in the West Bank of Palestine).

The World Council of Churches sent me a CD of photos from Jerusalem, the Jews for Justice for Palestine uploaded their photos for us, and the Christian Peacemakers have a huge collection for use on their site. Other groups and individuals gave us their photos to use. We even received photos from a world renowned photo-journalist. They say a picture speaks a thousand words and, believe me, these photos do.

The exhibition told the story of the people of Palestine as they struggle under occupation. We didn't tell their story; we allowed others to speak. The story was told through the testimonies of many witnesses. They were human rights activists, ordinary citizens and members of peacemaker teams. They were Jewish, Christian, Muslim and even, I dare say, humanists. They were Israelis, Palestinians and internationalists. They were there to testify through the reports they had written and the photos they had taken. I spent a week putting together reports from a huge range of people and groups from Palestine and Israel, and I cried every day of that week. If you read what I read you might cry too, whether in anger or in sympathy.

The Amnesty International report *Troubled Waters* told how Israel allows the Palestinians only 15% of their own water, so they are reduced to extreme water shortages, while the rest goes to Israel. Research by The Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions reveals that more than 24 000 Palestinian homes have been demolished by the Israeli military since 1967. B'Tselem, a very important Israeli human rights organisation, reported on the human rights abuses by Israeli settlers and military, endured constantly by Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. Breaking the Silence, a group of Israeli ex-soldiers, deplores the way Palestinians are treated by the Israeli military. The Christian Peacemaker Teams wrote about the violence and harassment by Israeli settlers and the stealing of Palestinian land. And these were not the only 'speakers'.

The photos and reports are a damning indictment of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. How can

the world continue to allow Israel to colonize Palestine so violently and without mercy?

An elder in a very small village said it all. He was living in a tent because he no longer had any alternative.

"This is the 21st Century" he observed, *"and the tent in which we sit is in danger of demolition."*

I am still crying.

Lorraine Inglis

A Massacre is not a Massacre

This is not a poem; a massacre is not a massacre.

I don't write poems but, in any case, poems are not poems. Long ago, I was made to understand that Palestine was not Palestine. I was also informed that Palestinians were not Palestinians.

They also explained to me that ethnic cleansing was not ethnic cleansing. And when naive old me saw freedom fighters they patiently showed me that they were not freedom fighters and that resistance was not resistance.

And when, stupidly, I noticed arrogance, oppression and humiliation, they benevolently enlightened me, so I can see that arrogance was not arrogance, oppression was not oppression, and humiliation was not humiliation.

I saw misery, racism, inhumanity and a concentration camp. But they told me that they were the experts in misery, racism, inhumanity and concentrations camps and I have to take their word for it, this was not misery, racism, inhumanity and a concentration camp.

Over the years they've taught me so many things, invasion was not invasion, occupation was not occupation, colonialism was not colonialism and apartheid was not apartheid...

They opened my simple mind to even more complex truths that my poor brain could not on its own compute like 'having nuclear weapons' was not 'having nuclear weapons', 'not having weapons of mass destruction' was 'having weapons of mass destruction', and democracy (in the Gaza strip) was not democracy. Having second class citizens (in Israel) was democracy.

So you'll excuse me if I am not surprised to learn today that there were more things that I thought were evident that are not, peace activists are not peace activists, piracy is not piracy, the massacre of unarmed people is not the massacre of unarmed people.

I have such a limited brain and my ignorance is unlimited. And they're so f%\$&ing intelligent. Really!

Ghassan Hage

Question time in the House

State Greens MP, Lee Rhiannon, who will leave State Parliament to stand for election to the Federal Senate when that election is announced, often graces our TV screens with concise critiques of State Labour government policies and politics. Her comments give viewers an opportunity to form more comprehensive opinions of State government issues. Though interested in political issues, I've not been in the habit of actually meeting politicians, but on 29 June I attended the last coffee morning gathering for her supporters in a Parliament House conference room.

To begin with, Lee Rhiannon gave credit to our new Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, for her work in previous portfolios, saying she is 'a credit to her sisters' but also expressing concern about her consensus politics, which Rhiannon fears may mean Julia Gillard will cave in to the 'big end of town.' Throughout her talk, Rhiannon made it clear she has concern about governments selling out and privatising too many public assets. Her mantra, expressed often during the morning was 'we must protect the silverware.' That is, the community must get behind the issues and give strong messages that bring in changes for the public good.

Education, power, health and transport are all at risk of privatisation by State government, and privatisation deals a blow to the foundation of a just society. The Greens want to shore up the State and protect publicly owned infrastructure which ensures a fair go for all.

Most of the major issues she discussed were not new to me: inequity in public/private school funding; the controversial NAPLAN scheme; failure to act against the Australian Builders and Construction Commission; the need to switch to renewable energy; politicians' promises to do what electors want, but their hypocritical and contradictory decisions; collusion between Labour and Liberals over the future of 'Barangaroo' and much more. However, her 'insider' view, with details new to me, made the meeting suddenly more enthralling.

The audience paid silent close attention. At question time I discovered what they'd been thinking about. The legendary Jack Munday expressed concern over Federal finance minister Lindsay Tanner's criticism of Green policies because his electorate may fall to the Greens at the coming Federal election.

Our OWN Merle Hight reminded us of the problems inherent in the current drop in TAFE funding and the increasing funding being given to private colleges. Such a move closes off opportunities to vulnerable old and young

students for skills training. Another OWN stalwart, Betty Johnson, raised concerns that those employed as aged care nurses are not currently required to be registered, making it impossible to follow their employment history. Another member of the gathering expressed concern over the amount of manufacturing work being sent to China, depriving workers here of much needed job opportunities and further reducing opportunities for employment of apprentices.

At the close of the meeting, the intensity of people's interest was almost palpable. Being there had been extremely stimulating and has only increased my readiness to listen even more critically to what politicians are saying. I did notice that most members of the gathering were seniors, people with life experience and community concern who have perceptive comments to make. I also noticed that Lee Rhiannon, and her MP colleague, Jack Kay, were listening to them. I had been at the 'coal-face' of democracy and found the whole experience very worthwhile.

You could do worse than give it a try yourself.

Bev Cameron

LawAccess

LawAccess NSW is a free government telephone service that provides legal information, advice and referrals for people who have legal problems in NSW.

In May 2010 LawAccess NSW launched a new service called LawAssist. It is a website with practical information and tools for people who are representing themselves in the Local Courts.

The first topic is small claims debt cases, and there are resources to help both creditors and debtors. Later in the year car accidents and apprehended violence orders will be added as topics.

The LawAssist resources include step by step guides, instructions for completing court forms, sample court forms, checklists and frequently asked questions. Short video clips of different stages of the court process are being prepared. You can find LawAssist at:

www.lawaccess.nsw.gov.au/lawassist.

How Could They?

This project has many mothers. For OWN, its birth began at an OWN forum on the Prevention of Violence Against Older Women in April 2008. Sue Field, NSW Trustee and Guardian Fellow in Elder Law, School of Law, University of Western Sydney, and Beth Eldridge, Coordinator, OWN NSW identified a gap in not only the type of information available to older women on the potential for financial abuse, but they way in which existing material missed the target group because it failed to engage them. This failure puts older women at an even greater risk of being abused by those who they may rely on for social connectivity, physical and emotional support.

Ensuring that older women are made aware of their basic legal rights is a responsibility of all levels of government and society. Yet those most isolated have the greatest difficulty getting in that information. After devising a strategy to overcome this problem in a number of key areas, we approached The Law and Justice Foundation, and applied for a small \$5000 grant to trial our concept. With the generous support of the University of Western Sydney, OWN NSW and Legal Aid NSW, and our members across the state, we explored how our design could be realised.

Research had proved that fundamental communication problems arise when the resources are not tailored adequately to the target group. Small print and the use of legalese are major barriers for older women. The use of stories was a key design feature that came out of our early conference research. Although many women did not feel comfortable about taking material home, they easily related stories, and solutions that they had encountered reading magazines in waiting rooms, or listening to community radio. For women from non-English speaking backgrounds the access to information via the community radio was a vital link, and this transference of information through memorable stories was a key factor for many who had sought resources to connect with their communities, seek assistance or break free from situations of violence. The stories got them in, and then they were finally within reach of assistance. This is an area we hope to explore in the future. We are currently working with Eastern Sydney Multicultural Access Project to

have the some of brochures translated into community languages and contexts.

Older women play a critical role in supporting their families and communities. Many do not recognise that the situations that they are entering into have the potential for abuse. In an environment of increasing social and financial pressure, older women must also ensure that they do not jeopardise their own security when asked to help those they love. Some of the worst cases of financial elder abuse are perpetrated by those closest to them, and begin with seemingly small transgressions, often culminating in the inadvertent surrendering of power, authority and financial security. Unfortunately unless they recognise this potential and initiate steps to protect themselves early, communication can break down, with the situation and the relationship deteriorating.

How Could They? Begins with a series of 5 brochures exploring the legal and financial issues:

- for older women considering 'Granny Flats' - *A Room of One's Own*
- for older women negotiating new relationships - *Love at Last!*
- for older lesbians negotiating new relationships - *Over the Rainbow*
- for older women considering gifts and loans - *One Good Deed...*
- for older women considering going Guarantor- *Safe as Houses?* (pictured right)

These brochures have been developed by and for older women, based on real situations.

The questions, strategies and resources contained in each brochure have been designed to empower older women with tools to resolve problems and strengthen their position, without jeopardizing their personal relationships.

These memorable, easy-to-read snapshots of women's wisdom were officially launched by Anne Cregan, a Partner at Blake Dawson Legal on 27 July 2010.

Beth Eldridge

- How important to May are her gardens? Can she get some community assistance to maintain them?
- May's local council could advise her of other services which might assist her in the future, should her family withdraw their support.

The information contained in this publication is intended for use in NSW, and relates to the law as at 1st May 2010.

Contact OWN NSW:
phone: (02) 9247 7046
info@ownsw.org.au or
www.ownsw.org.au to obtain further copies of this publication.

This publication has been developed by The University of Western Sydney and The Older Women's Network NSW, produced with the financial assistance of the Law and Justice Foundation of NSW.

The Foundation seeks to advance the fairness and equity of the justice system and to improve access to justice, especially for socially and economically disadvantaged people.

<http://www.lawfoundation.net.au>

This publication is intended as a guide to the law and should not be used as a substitute for legal advice.

Disclaimer: any opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Law and Justice Foundation's Board of Governors.

Safe as Houses?

Legal and financial issues for older women considering going Guarantor



May has a beautiful home with award-winning gardens. Now it could all be put at risk ...

Since her husband's death, May's son Tim has helped maintain the gardens, spending every second weekend at her house. Now his weekends must be spent renovating their own apartment because his wife Amy is expecting their first child and they need to sell their apartment and move to a bigger place before the baby arrives. But there is another problem ...

Agencies and others May could contact for help and advice:

- ① **The Older Persons' Legal Service** (A service of The Aged-care Rights Service). Tel: (02) 9281 3600 or 1800 424 079 (toll-free)
- ① **Financial Information Service (FIS)**. Tel: 131 021
- ① **LawAccess NSW** Tel: 1300 888 529. TTY: 1300 889 529
- ① **Legal Information Access Centre (LIAC)** (02) 9273 1558 or Tel: 1300 888 529. TTY: 1300 889 529
- ① **Welfare Rights Centre** - Tel: (02) 9211 5300 or 1800 226 028 (Toll free)
- ① **Aged & Community Services Association of NSW** Tel: (02) 8754 0400
- ① **Her solicitor**. If May does not have a solicitor, she could contact the Law Society of NSW Solicitor Referral Service on (02) 9926 0300 for a list of solicitors in her area who deal with property matters.



**LAW AND JUSTICE
FOUNDATION**
OF NEW
SOUTH WALES



**University of
Western Sydney**
Bringing knowledge to life

When Tim and Amy applied for an extension of their mortgage to have the renovations done, the bank refused because their income will be reduced when Amy leaves work. “Seek a Guarantor” was their advice.

Tim said he would ask May, since he has done so much to help her keep her home.

When Tim raised this with May he was surprised by her response. May didn’t understand why her son and his wife could not move in with her, sell their place as is, and buy somewhere as soon as they could afford it.

Questions May might ask:

Q. Is there another way I can address this situation without going guarantor?

A. Yes there is. If you don’t want to put your house at risk by going guarantor for Tim, there are two options that you could investigate:

- 1 You could contribute to the mortgage repayments, or

2 You could lend money to Tim via a loan agreement.

Q. Which option would give me more protection?

A. Option 1 would provide very little protection because it could be seen as a gift from you to your son.

Option 2 would tend to give you greater protection because a loan agreement securing the loan against the property is more clear-cut. You will be able to get your money back right after the bank does, should the couple ever default on their loan or if their relationship were to break down.

Q. Is there anything else I should consider?

A. Yes, another option for securing the loan would be for you to lodge a caveat on the title of Tim’s and Amy’s property. This would ensure that there were no additional dealings with the property without your knowledge and consent.

Q. If I went guarantor, what steps could I take to protect myself?

A. The first step you should take is to seek legal advice regarding the legal documents relating to going guarantor, as they can be complex and difficult to understand.

It is essential that you understand that the only reason the lenders want security (a guarantor) is because they’re not prepared to take the risk themselves.

Get Independent Advice

It is important that you do not rely on the advice provided to you by Tim or the bank’s representative.

Before making any decision, seek independent legal advice on each of the options, so that you understand your position and the risks you are taking in any transaction.

Personal Considerations

- How would each of these options affect May’s relationship with her son and her coming grandchild?

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 - covers to Jun30, 2011 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

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.

Drumming 12.15 - 1.30pm Wednesdays, Mott Hall, Argyle St. Millers Point. \$8 per session. Drums and gourds are provided. If you would like to drum please contact Lorraine:9569 0051

Lost Ladies

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

Annette Butterfield: 9665 5369 email (changed) below: abutterfield_852@hotmail.com

Film Discussion group

You are invited to join us on **Tuesday 10 August**, to see *The Waiting City*. Recommended for viewing are: *I Am Love* and *Me and Orson Welles*.

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 **16 August** 12.30-2.30 pm at 87 Lower Fort Street. This month's book is: *Great Mischief* by Alistair Maclean. Bring a sandwich for lunch at midday. Any questions, phone Anne Marie on 9622 0717. Please note the change of venue this month.

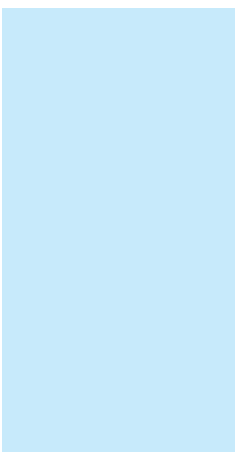
Aboriginal Support Circle on **9 August** 10.30 am Monday. 75 Windmill Street, Millers Point. Special Guest speaker - Joe Parker-Brooke. Please contact Pat Zinn: 9389 1090

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 **14 August**. Contact Nora Huppert on 9181 3918 or Bev Cameron on 9957 5367 for details.

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

OWN Matters



**PRINT
POST**
PP239337/00007

**POSTAGE
PAID**
AUSTRALIA