



OWN MATTERS

Refugee Camp In Neighbourhood. Virginia Clair Walker OAM.

Little By Little. Concessions Safe. When We Grow Old.

Bust The Streets. Land Of Fair Go No More? What A Troupe.

Homestay With A Difference. Lego And Gender Bias.



Bust the Budget rally

OWN members hit the streets to support the Sydney protest against the federal budget.



Lego of the past stereotypes

Building block company listens to demands for strong female characters in new toy ranges.



Fight to save Redfern block

Protestors set up tent embassy in effort to protect Sydney's most valuable lot from controversial project.



Hard journey to endure

Auburn Council gave locals the chance to learn about the true and desperate plight of refugees.



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Who Are We?

The Older Women's Network (OWN) NSW is the peak body for 18 groups and 6 Wellness Centres 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 \$35 and \$44 for organisations and includes GST.

Have your say

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.

Send by email or mail marked Attention – Editorial Team.

The email address is newsletter@ownnsw.org.au.

Please include contact details. Contributions must be received by the third Tuesday of each month.

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OWN Office

From 10am-3pm the phone is answered by one of our friendly volunteers. Out of office hours, leave a message, with your contact number.

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INVITATION TO ALL OWN MEMBERS



AGMs

Notice of OWN NSW and OWN Australia Annual General Meetings

CONFERENCE & HARBOUR CRUISE

AUGUST 20 & 21, 2014

THIS YEAR IT'S DIFFERENT!

The idea of back-to-back AGMs is being trialled this year.

We hope that it will assist with exploring new horizons, minimise costs and create time for OWN members from across Australia to get to know each other.

The OWN NSW AGM will follow the OWN Australia AGM.

DETAILS:

WED AUG 20: OWN NSW & OWN Australia AGMs

TIME: 9.30-11.30am: AGMs followed by Guest speaker Age Discrimination Commissioner, The Hon Susan Ryan AO. Additional speakers after lunch include The Hon Anna Bligh. The program will finish at about 4pm.

Venue: YWCA, 5-11 Wentworth Ave, Sydney (Museum Station nearby)

THURS AUG 21: HARBOUR CRUISE WITH LUNCH

TIME: 11am-2pm: Boat leaves from King St Wharf

**PLEASE NOTE: There are TWO separate booking forms
One for the AGMs/Conference/Cruise, and one for
accommodation at the YHotel, 5-11 Wentworth Ave Sydney**

Letters

More dollars for deficient aged care to continue

From today, nursing home operators will be able to charge incoming residents higher fees, but they won't have to spend one cent of it on bettering care.

CPSA has said from the outset that the Living Longer Living Better aged care reforms were fee reforms. A big opportunity to address the deficient care that is a reality of life for many nursing home residents across Australia was wasted by not reforming aged care regulation.

There is no requirement to spend the extra revenue on improving care standards. Nursing homes will be able to pocket the extra cash because the ineffective, minimum care standards that 95% of homes meet remain exactly the same.

Charmaine Crowe, CPSA

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Pensioners echo calls for review of unfair legislation

Pensioners echo calls for an independent review of new laws governing residential parks that

Newspapers for news?

In answer to my query as to where women are getting their news these days, here are the web sites that Cate Turner uses. They are all free.

The Guardian – www.theguardian.com/au

Mamamia – www.mamamia.com.au

Politic Oz - www.themonthly.com.au/politicoz

Women's Agenda - www.womensagenda.com.au/

Some of you who weren't previously familiar with these – like me – may like to try one, or all, of them and see if they suit your needs and interests.

Anna Logan

.....

stand to disadvantage thousands of older people across NSW.

The NSW Greens and Labor have called on Fair Trading Minister Matthew Mason-Cox to urgently review the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Act. Residential parks offer a form of low-cost housing for more than 33,000 people in NSW, but park living will likely become more expensive once the Act takes effect. The Act allows operators to share in any capital gain a homeowner makes and will permit site fee increases on the basis of future expenses for the park.

The industry is the major beneficiary of the new Act. Park residents on the other hand feel they were ignored during the consultation process and they want answers.

Charmaine Crowe, CPSA

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Rosalie Kunoth-Monks wins Award.

Arrente Elder, Rosalie Kunoth-Monks, was awarded the first Dr. Yunupingu Human Rights Achievement Award at a ceremony at NSW Parliament House in June.



**Award winner - Arrente Elder
Rosalie Kunoth-Monks**

This was in recognition of more than half a century of work as a community leader in Utopia, Northern Territory, and as a stateswoman leading First Peoples and others towards greater justice and equality.

NSW MLC, Shaoquett Mosselmann, said that the event had two aims, “to recognise the phenomenal contribution that many Indigenous Australians make to human rights and social justice, and to also recognise Indigenous rights as Australia’s greatest human rights and social justice struggle.”

Congratulations, Rosalie! I think that many of our readers will join with me in hoping to see you awarded the next Australian of the Year award.

Pat Zinn



**Sydney Morning Herald
May 13, 1921**

Lady Barrister admitted by full court.

Miss Ada Emily Evans, B.A., LL.B. (Syd.), was yesterday admitted by the Full Court, consisting of Sir Wm. Cullen, C.J., Mr Justice Pring, and Mr Justice Wade, to practise as barrister of the Supreme Court of New South Wales.

Miss Evans, who was born in Essex, came to Australia and secured her law degree during the later period of Sir Frederick Darley’s Chief Justiceship, but on then applying to the Full Court for admission was refused, the law or usage at that time disqualifying women from holding such a position. She returned to England in the hope of commencing practice as a conveyancer, but was confronted with the same disqualification there.

The sex disability existing in New South Wales was removed by the Women’s Legal Status Act, passed by the Holman Government in 1918. This provides that a person shall not by reason of sex be



deemed to be under any disability or subject to any disqualification. They can now be elected to act as a member of the Legislative Assembly, Lord Mayor, or alderman of the City Council of Sydney, Mayor, president, or alderman or councillor of any municipality or shire, a Judge of the Supreme Court or District Court, chairman of Quarter Sessions, stipendiary or police magistrate or Justice of the Peace, or to be admitted to practise as a barrister or conveyancer.

The Act, while permitting women to become Judges or barristers, does not entitle them to act as Jurors.

Taking advantage of this enabling Act, and after being registered as a student-at-law for two years, Miss Evans applied again and was admitted, being the first of her sex to gain the privilege in New South Wales.



At and Beyond the Rocks

Bankstown Greek OWN (G.O.W.N)

The Bankstown Greek Older Women's Network is in its 19th year, and all the members are still very committed and enthusiastic about our community organisation. With our committee of eight volunteer members, we strive to improve from one year to the next, with the aim of continually making our group a success.

I would like to express the importance and meaning of what the Greek Older Women's group provides to our members.

This group means many things to many ladies. It is a very big part of their every-day lives and is a great support network for them in an emotional sense. They have a sense of belonging and it is a place to meet and make new friends, socialise, get informed about various issues in our language and to share and celebrate other cultures together. We anticipate making 2015 a bigger and better year.

Connie Kondilios



Blacktown OWN

Some highlights for 2014 Our 'Feel Good Day' was held on March 17 with the help of the Council this year. We could only invite fifty members.

OWN Parramatta's Brenda Hodgekinson ran a motivational session, which was followed by Tai Chi, and sessions on hand and face massage. I opted for foot massage!

It was a great day and of course a two course lunch laid on – all for FREE!

In July we had a 'Safety in the Street Workshop' for members and community. We had sixty-two in attendance and this time we had hot soup with crusty bread and Mango pie for afters, for \$5 entry donation.

Our guest speaker was Chris Coles, a world renowned martial arts demonstrator, who specialised in empowering older people in their daily lives. When Chris was speaking you could have heard a pin drop everyone had a good day.

Coral Littlewood



Brisbane Waters OWN

We continue to meet once a month and we now have a permanent home at Niagara Park Guide Hall.

We have had some fantastic guest speakers including:

- Author Jill Mather who introduced us to Historic Paris
- David Groves (Gosford Driving School), who gave us tips on driving and what to expect from the driving test as we get older
- Keiko Clements who updated us on services available through the Home and Community Care programme and
- Shannon O'Haden from Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service.

This last guest speaker sparked members' interest leading to an excursion to the Helicopter Base in Newcastle. We were joined by members from Wyong and Newcastle OWN, given details of the service's work, a tour of the base, a look at the helicopters and a sumptuous morning tea and lunch.

Carole Davidson, Convenor





Illawarra OWN members at a senior's health expo



The Bankstown drummers

Illawarra OWN

The past twelve months has been a year of steady growth in the Illawarra where our paid up membership now totals 150. At Corrimal the bi-monthly Ordinary and the Social meetings are well attended by 40-45 women each meeting. Our Wellness Centre has about 95 women attend each week.

The Social Committee arranged some very interesting speakers for the monthly social meetings as well as some most enjoyable outings. The Current Affairs, Writing, Board Games, Coffee Club and Lunch Groups meet regularly and the friendship and support found in the groups is of immense benefit to the members.

The 2013/2014 year proved to be good for promoting wellness, friendship and mental stimulation for our members - who shared lunches, coffee days, birthday celebrations and wellness activities, adding much to the social cohesion of the group. Well done, Illawarra.

Barbara Malcolm and Ann Baumber



Sutherland OWN

The OWN Wellness Centre has continued to provide older women in the Shire with affordable and accessible activities which ensure better health and wellbeing.

One comment from a participant:

“Attending the Wellness Centre has changed my life. I can move a lot more easily. I have made new friends and really enjoy the social events that I have attended. I wish I had heard of it years earlier. Thanks one and all.”

In the last year registrations increased from 120 to 181, with the attendance at the Exercise Activities expanding to maximum.

International Folk Dancing on Mondays has been replaced by Performance, while Wednesday afternoon is trialing Drumming. Term 2, 2014 has replaced International Folk Dancing with Mid-Strength Exercise. Gentle Exercise on Wednesdays has overtaken Tai Chi as the best

attendance, while Meditation with a new trainer has reached capacity every session.



Wollondilly OWN

Our members have had great fun in various activities that have included Face to Face, a short course of instruction on Sketching from a Photo, Family History Talks, History Orientation Tours, Preserving Memories and a great talk on “Home Children at Mowbray Park”, now a farm stay between Picton and The Oaks.

We have had the Elders Olympics for the second year, the debate between the Seniors and the local Picton High students, Trivia, Tech Savvy Seniors - a workshop, Seniors Expo at Warragamba and Bargo and Music and Memories.

Our various small groups are going well with numbers lifting in Gentle Exercise and Craft - members attended a Beading course this year. Our monthly train trips to Sydney and our monthly bus trips included:

- A 2 hour Cruise on Sydney Harbour
- Burratorang Lookout and Local Tour
- Malcolm's Grevillia Nursery and Rainforest Walk
- Motor Life Museum Grange
- Nan Tein Temple
- Red Cow Gardens-Sutton Forest.





Aboriginal Support Circle Issues

Sydney's Most Valuable Vacant Lot

The Block in Redfern, bounded by Evelyn, Caroline, Louis and Vine Streets, was the first and largest urban land rights victory in Australian history, when the Whitlam government bought the 102 tumbledown terraces there and handed down the deeds in 1973.

Aboriginal people moved in and found work in nearby factories, and the Block became not only a haven, but led to the birth of the Aboriginal Medical Service, the Black Theatre and the Aboriginal Legal Service. However, some people stopped paying rent and there was no money to maintain the houses.

Then came a wave of drugs and crime, and the award-winning Pemulway Project was developed to relocate the tenants, tear down the houses and rebuild the whole area as an affordable housing precinct for Aboriginal people, with 36 three and four bedroom townhouses and 26 two and three bedroom apartments above a



gym. The Project also includes a business college, a student hostel, a retail outlet, an elder's centre and an art gallery.

Now the Block is the most valuable vacant lot in Sydney, less than two kilometres from the CBD, offering ten thousand square metres of prime real estate in the heart of gentrifying Redfern. The project is dividing the local Aboriginal community and on May 26th, a tent embassy led by activist Jenny Munro was established on the area earmarked for housing. The embassy is growing by the day.

The protest comes because the Aboriginal Housing Company (AHC) has signed a contract for

design and construction of the commercial half of the planned development, a student hostel with seven (possibly fourteen) stories, with Delcorp, the biggest developer in Redfern. The idea is that the hostel and other retail development, plus state and federal governments, will help to pay for the housing. However, this is a complete gamble, as neither government has given any indication of agreeing.

The protesters at the embassy are there for the long haul because they fear that the CEO of the Aboriginal Housing Company, Mick Mundine, will sell their land. They have had long-held grievances with respect to the AHC administration and its lack



of transparency and are calling for the AHC to build Aboriginal housing on the Block as the first stage of the Pemulwuy Project.

This looks to be a long drawn-out battle. The block must remain in Aboriginal hands and my sympathies are with the protestors but from a practical and financial point of view I can't see a resolution any time soon.

Pat Zinn



Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers statement

We are thirteen indigenous grandmothers who came together for the first time from October 11 through October 17, 2004, in Phoenicia, New York.

We gathered from the four directions in the land of the Iroquois Confederacy. We come here from the Amazon rainforest, the Alaskan Tundra of North America, the great forest of the American northwest, the vast plains of North America, the highlands of Central America, the Black Hills of South Dakota, the mountains of Oaxaca, the desert of the American southwest, the mountains of Tibet and Nepal and from the rainforest of Central Africa.

Affirming our relations with traditional medicine peoples and communities throughout

the world, we have been brought together by a common vision to form a new global alliance.

We are the International Council of Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers. We have united as one. Ours is an alliance of prayer, education and healing for our Mother Earth, all Her inhabitants, all the children and for the next seven generations to come.

We are deeply concerned with the unprecedented destruction of our Mother Earth, the contamination of our air, waters and soil, the atrocities of war, the global scourge of poverty, the threat of nuclear weapons and waste, the prevailing culture of materialism, the epidemics which threaten the health of the Earth's peoples, the exploitation of indigenous medicines, and with the destruction of indigenous ways of life.

We, the International Council of Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers, believe that our ancestral ways of prayer, peacemaking and healing are vitally needed today. We come together to nurture, educate and train our children. We come together to uphold the practice of our ceremonies and affirm the right to use our plant medicines free of legal restriction. We come together to protect the lands

where our peoples live and upon which our cultures depend, to safeguard the collective heritage of traditional medicines, and to defend the earth Herself.

We believe that the teachings of our ancestors will light our way through an uncertain future. We join with all those who honour the Creator, and to all who work and pray for our children, for world peace, and for the healing of our Mother Earth.

The grandmothers include:

- Agnes Baker Pilgrim - Confederated Tribes of Siletz - Oregon, USA;
- Aama Bombo - Tamang - Nepal;
- Margaret Behan - Arapaho/ Cheyenne - Montana, USA;
- Rita Pitka Blumenstein - Yup'ik - Alaskan Tundra, USA;
- Julieta Casimiro - Mazatec - Huautla de Jimenez, Mexico;
- Maria Alice Campos Freire - Amazonian Rainforest, Brazil;
- Flordemayo - Mayan - Central America;
- Tsering Dolma Gyaltong - Tibetan;
- Clara Shinobu Iura - Amazonian Rainforest, Brazil;
- Beatrice Long Visitor Holy Dance Oglala Lakota - Dakota, USA;
- Rita Long Visitor Holy Dance - Oglala Lakota - Dakota, USA;
- Mona Polacca - Hopi/Havasupai / Tewa - Arizona, USA;
- Bernadette Rebienot - Omyene - Gabon, Africa.



For many refugees their journey takes weeks - eating what they can find; struggling to find water; family members dying from exhaustion, malnutrition or illness. On arrival in a camp, the refugees – most of whom are women and children – have no money, no food, no water and no shelter

A Refugee Camp in my Neighbourhood

Recently I became aware of what a progressive Local Council Auburn is. It obviously is responding to its demographic, so during Refugee Week in June, in collaboration with 25 community organisations and settlement providers, a tour was arranged of a simulated “refugee camp”, held in the building and the grounds of the Community Centre.

The tours were held every 15 minutes during the day from 16-22/6/14; they lasted one and a half hours; and they had about 20 people booked into each tour! I was astounded – and then very moved when I participated in such a tour.

Our group had, as tour guides, a former refugee, and a migrant. Both had the facts of living as refugees in overseas camps at their fingertips, and were able to answer any questions we had. We started out by being introduced to the pictures and stories of four refugees, now settled in Auburn, each with a different experience.

We moved from room to room in the Auburn Community Centre. In one room we saw a map displaying where people fled from, and to. At the end of 2013, the countries receiving most refugees were Pakistan, Iran and Lebanon. Those providing most refugees were Afghanistan, Syria and Somalia.

We eventually moved outside, where we saw and heard some shocking facts about a typical overseas refugee camp. First of all, the average length of stay is 17 years – 17! We found ourselves in a “camp” for

1500 refugees. I couldn’t believe what I heard – two showers provided, available for three hours per day, only two toilets available (with no lighting at night; apparently it wasn’t unheard of for small children to fall into these drop toilets and be lost), the one water tap turned on for two hours morning and evening, involving a queue of five hours duration.

We saw a tent, made up from whatever materials and fabrics were to hand by the occupants themselves (not provided by UNHCR, though possibly they do in some camps), that would house, I’d imagine, two Australians. This one would have been expected to hold a family of ten members. We saw the pitiful items spread out around the tent that the refugees may have brought - a few cooking utensils, perhaps some bedding, a tiny amount of food. Toys were created from such things as old car tyres. Food was provided on a daily basis by the UNHCR, but apparently it’s barely enough to keep body and soul together.

Then, already unsettled and now ashamed, we heard of the refugees’ hardships in Australia even once they were accepted. No free lunch indeed! Congratulations, Auburn – you told a powerful story.

Anna Logan



Virginia Clare Walker, OAM for services to the community through human rights organisations

In 2002, Virginia started writing letters to people in detention in Curtin and Port



Hedland at the urging of a friend. Virginia had recently retired and her friend thought that she would have some extra time to do this.

Letter writing made Virginia part of a network of people who were keen to assist asylum seekers and a plea went out to see whether someone from Sydney could have a person detained at Port Hedland stay with them for three weeks. This was a man from Kuwait, who had previously been detained in Villawood, and funds were raised for him to fly from Perth to see his Sydney lawyer.

The upshot was that Virginia had her first refugee visitor to stay at her unit in Glebe. This was Virginia's first experience with a refugee and she realised that this person was totally dependent for assistance with food, fares, medicines etc. This man's claims were eventually accepted but his continuing support relied on donations and the goodwill of advocates and advocacy organisations.

Several months later the person who asked Virginia to write letters also asked her to visit Villawood. Fast forward to 2014 and Virginia has visited Villawood at least 500 times, visiting families and single men from a variety of countries including Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Iran and Nigeria, each time taking food and beverages to share. She has also accompanied them to hearings before the Tribunal, oriented them into their communities and located

suitable accommodation and furniture for them.

It was apparent in the early days that funds were needed to support refugees in the community, whilst their claims were being processed, and tax deductibility status had to be acquired. In short, a foundation had to be started and so Bridge for Asylum Seekers was born, the name being chosen because the funds were for people in the community on bridging visas and Virginia, at that time, lived in Bridge Road, Glebe.

Bridge for Asylum Seekers Foundation was auspiced by the Uniting Church and officially launched on the 11th June 2003, a date that coincided with the Sydney Film Festival.

So Virginia, a regular Festival attendee and action-oriented woman, spruiked the Foundation to the attendees. One of the films coincidentally focused on the plight of refugees and Virginia saw this as her opportunity to speak to a captive audience. Donations and regular commitments to funding followed, as did the support of Leichhardt and the City of Sydney Councils. To date, 1200 asylum seekers have been assisted and hundreds of thousands of dollars have been donated to the Foundation, which continues its work to this day.

Rita Tratt



Ada Evans, Australia's first woman to graduate in Law in 1902, was not admitted to the NSW Bar until 1921 because the NSW Legal Practice Act referred to "persons" with a law degree being able to practise, and women were not accepted as "persons"

Bit by Bit and Little by Little

By women for women

ADA EVANS
(1872-1947)



Ada Evans was eleven years old when she arrived in Sydney from the UK, with her parents and some members of her family. She attended Sydney Girls' High School and later the University of Sydney (B.A., 1895).

She believed that women needed to be trained as lawyers if an all male legal system were to change. She knew that, as the law stood, she would not be allowed to practise, but in 1899 she enrolled in the Sydney University Law School. The Dean of Law wouldn't have accepted a female law student but he was away on sabbatical. On his return, the Dean of Law, Pitt Cobbett, claimed that Ada Evans "did not have the physique for law".

The Supreme Court rejected her application to be registered as a student-at-law on the grounds that the admission of barristers and solicitors did not apply to women. In 1902 she became Australia's first woman to graduate LL.B but was excluded from being admitted to the bar, both in Australia and England. The "women are not persons" idea got in her way. That's right.

Women were not persons.

We are not talking about the distant past here.



Ada Evans died after I was born. But in 1902, the University and legal fraternity were still using regulations to exclude women from professions, particularly law. In the UK, university regulations had referred to "persons" with particular qualifications being entitled to enter and University authorities decided that persons did not include women. This idea of women not being persons became embedded. The Legal Practice Act referred to "persons" with a law degree as entitled to practise. As a woman with a law degree, Ada Evans was excluded.

Letters to successive governments, and the support of various women's organisations didn't bring any change. It wasn't until the passage of the Women's Legal Status Act 1918 (NSW) that women became "persons" and could become lawyers. By 1918 the lives of women had changed. They had achieved the right to vote. Many worked on the land, in some professions and in factories. During the war, women had served on battlefields as nurses.

Ada Evans served the two years required as a student-at-law, and in 1921, was the first woman to be admitted to the New South Wales Bar.

She declined practising law; her life had changed

too. She and her brother had developed a self-sufficient farm in Bowral.

Ada Evans was a pioneer in her struggle to become a barrister. We can celebrate with her that we legally become “persons”, with the rights that implied.

Lorraine Inglis



Concessions to basic living expenses safe

The NSW Government will be protecting the concessions to pensioners and seniors that have been axed by the Federal Government in its recent budget.

“Many older people, especially pensioners, rely on concessions because of the rising cost of living. It was extremely disappointing to see the Federal Government axe \$450 million from the budget that would have funded a range of important concessions over four years,” said Ian Day, CEO of COTA NSW. “We are delighted the State Government has addressed community concern about the welfare of older people and has stepped in to plug the funding gap created by the Federal budget.”

The NSW budget will now allocate an extra \$107 million annually to maintain a range of concessions.

“These concessions make a real difference to those who are eligible for them, and we pleased to see that the State Government has recognised this.”

COTA, NSW



When we grow old

by Josie Jackson

When we are young we rarely think
That one day we'll grow old.
We drink too much, we smoke too much
We never feel the cold.
We laze beneath the burning sky
We swim in sparkling seas,
We never thought that all this fun
Would cause rheumatic knees.
All the booze we guzzled down
All the smokes we sucked,
We never knew, in later years
That both lungs would be #x%/.
Just waking up each morning
To face another day,
To get the body moving
Sends another ten hairs grey.
We think of all the fats we ate,
Good grief, it makes you shiver
Can you imagine what that muck
Has done to our poor liver?
The body just gets bigger
As you reach those golden years,
You tell yourself, you do quite well
As you wipe away the tears.
I don't hear anything these days
That I don't want to hear.
I don't do anything that needs
My body in full gear.
I never could imagine
Being old and grey and bent,
With my hair a different colour
And my energy all spent.
My face has dropped onto my neck,
My rosy cheeks have gone,
My body is all wrinkled,
I persevere, just carry on.

Thousands of people attended the rally to “Bust The Budget”. OWN member, Lyn McIver, of Fair Go for Pensioners, spoke and reminded us that it was the whole institution of Government, not just Tony Abbott, that doesn’t believe in a fair go

Bust the Budget: Bust the Streets

Early in July, I attended the Sydney rally organised by the Australian union movement, as did thousands of others – 6,000 was the police estimate, 15,000 the organisers’ estimate.

Our intention was to send a message to the incoming Senators, due to sit for the first time the next day. A sign I liked was in a teaching union’s cohort - “Joe Hockey – you shall not pass”. Double meaning there!

Among the speakers, we heard from Mark Lennon, Secretary of Unions NSW, who pleaded for no privatisation of poles and wires, or water (surely State matters?). Maree O’Halloran from the Welfare Rights Centre, spoke about the need for a jobs plan rather than cuts to welfare. She called the Budget a “tax and transfer” program, citing the lowest paid in the community as being subject to greater taxation, and the money being transferred to Discretionary Trusts and negative gearing.

Dave Oliver, Secretary of the ACTU, called Abbott’s Budget “the Americanisation of the Australian way of life”. He worries not only for the current workers, but future generations, who won’t get the excellent education and health care we’re used to. Business groups are actively lobbying for decreased penalty rates and deregulation of the industrial system.

Lyn McIver, of Fair Go for Pensioners, reminded us it was the whole institution of Government, not just Tony Abbott, that doesn’t believe in a fair go. She referred to the many people who cannot speak for themselves, but they know we don’t have



an economic crisis – that’s a deceit. Kerry Rodgers, a Registered Nurse, predicted that Emergency Departments will see enormous increases in patients, and reminded us that Primary Care, i.e., our local doctors, keeps patients out of expensive Acute Care hospital units.

It was a brilliant rally on a brilliant Sydney Sunday.
Anna Logan



The land of the fair go no more?

On the evening of 8th July, I was among the 2000 people who packed Sydney Town Hall to hear economist Joseph Stiglitz, the American economist and Nobel laureate, warn Australia not to follow the American model into inequality.

The Australia Institute, which part-funded the Stiglitz visit, provides some interesting statistics on the increasing inequality in Australia. They



Sonia Laverty, left, attended the 'Bust The Budget' rally with a friend

point out, for example, that the wealthiest 20 per cent of households in Australia now accounts for 61 per cent of total household net worth, whereas the poorest 20 per cent accounts for just 1 per cent. To put it another way - the richest 7 families in Australia hold more wealth than 1.73 million households (The Australia Institute, July 2014).

The tag of 'entitlement' applied to welfare programs during the recent budget period, the recipients of which are among the poorest households, could, and perhaps should, have been applied to the top 20 per cent of households. For it is here that budget savings worth more than \$40 billion per annum can be found, according to the Australia Institute.

These are:

- Subsidies to the mining industry - \$4 billion
- Superannuation tax concession to top 5% income earners - \$9 billion
- Subsidies for investments - \$11 billion (ref: Treasury's Taxation Expenditure Statement)
- Income Tax cuts to top 10% \$15.8 billion.

A clear message that I picked up from Stiglitz is that budget deficits and inequality is not just about economics, it's about policies and politics. Countries that survived the GFC, including Norway and Australia, Stiglitz claims, used their resources to reinvest in the people with very positive outcomes. He pointed out that targeting one group

over another to achieve savings will have the opposite effect, and America is a classic example.

It was good to hear a positive message after all the doom and gloom around as a result of the Federal budget. It seems that fairness is related to balance, or as the old saying goes, a 'fair go for everyone'!

Sonia Laverty



What a troupe - Behind the Glitz and Glamour of the Theatre Group

We may not be professional singers, actors or dancers, but we certainly are real troupers! Another old trouper, Merle Hight, invited us to perform at her Nursing Home in the inner west but as is often the case, we had no idea of where we would be presenting our show. Our only other performance of Cabaret had been in our own Mott Hall with other OWN members at the launch of Dorothy Cora's book *Vision and Vitality*. A real piece of cake!

Our second show would be performed outdoors, in a double doorway, between two food service areas while staff served hot soup and curried prawns. We did, however, manage to delay our start until most of the diners at least had their soup. Somehow we managed to complete our performance without any major mishaps as lunch proceeded and the children continued to make maximum use of the play equipment.

So I guess you could say that all we really need is Janice (our pianist) and a three by seven space. But please make it indoors without any meal in progress and give us a little leeway to the front and sides. (For OH and S reasons especially when there are wheelchairs and walking frames involved.)

That given, we can concentrate on entertaining you with all the glitz & glamour that you deserve.

That's my troupe, the Theatre Group.

Denise Miel



Chinese homestay guest? No problem. Using a mobile phone app the conversation continued to flow - slowly and silently!

Homestay with a Difference

My friend Judi has been a Homestay host for 14 years, and has made some fast friends. However there have been some hard cases, like Rebecca, a Chinese tour guide who came to stay for a week recently.

Nothing pleased her - not the prospect of Judi taking her to the Harbour for some sight-seeing, nor having lunch with her host and a French Homestay student, Louis, and least of all Judi's Standard Poodle, Phoenix. It turned out that Rebecca - though she'd known before she came that there was a dog in the house - was petrified of large dogs.

What Rebecca wanted above all else was to see a supermarket! While Judi thought this was a very strange destination for someone who'd come 10,000km to learn what interesting sights and sites she could show future travellers, she played the dutiful host and took Rebecca to the local Woolie's. Here, to Judi's amazement, she hunted out her prize - TIM TAMS!

Though Rebecca stayed only a week, she gradually relaxed into the ambience of Judi's beautiful home and friendly care.

Her English was nearly non-existent, but she had an amazing app on her mobile phone that allowed her to type in a question or comment in Chinese notation, and get in return the English phrase, which she would then show to her fellow conversationalist. They would do the same in reverse, allowing Rebecca to read the reply in Chinese characters. Judi said she, Louis and Rebecca carried on animated conversations through this amazing medium.

As Rebecca mellowed, she obviously wanted to repay Judi in some way for her kindness, and insisted she would make dinner one night. Judi had to buy all the ingredients for the Chinese dumplings, Rebecca's dish of choice, one of which was mince pork.

Now it just so happens that Judi doesn't eat pork, but didn't want to offend Rebecca by revealing this, as it seems these pork dumplings were the only dish she could make. Luckily a friend suggested she buy chicken mince

- Rebecca wouldn't know the difference. And that's exactly how the scenario went. But to make matters worse, the type of flour we use here is quite different from what Chinese cooks would use, and turned into a ball of sludge when placed in the boiling water.

Rebecca struggled over this meal in the kitchen for hours, till finally Judi went in to rescue the proceedings. The three diners valiantly waded through the resulting nightmare meal, with Rebecca oblivious to the discomfort of the other two, and thrilled she'd made this contribution!

To cap off this unique visit, Phoenix actually won Rebecca over, and they became best buddies.

Anna Logan



Lego and Gender Bias

One of the toys I have been most likely to buy, as mother and grandmother, has been Lego. For decades Lego has failed to appeal to girls. My son took to it avidly, but not my



Lego has been accused of showing a gender bias with their lego characters and sets. They market girl themed lego under the 'friends' name. A new female scientists set, top right, is due to be released

daughter. My grandson already loves it, and I would love my granddaughters to take it up.

It is both creative and technical; as a teacher I thought it developed skills in maths, science, and art.

Recently Charlotte, a seven year old girl, wrote: ***"I love legos but I don't like that there are more lego boy people and barely any lego girls. Today I went to a store and saw legos in two sections, the pink girls and the blue boys. All the girls did was sit at home, go to the beach and shop, and they had no jobs but the boys went on adventures, saved people, swam with sharks and even had jobs. I want you to make more lego girl people and let them go on adventures and have fun. OK!?! Thank you. from Charlotte."***

Lego Ideas is a site where enthusiasts can submit and vote on ideas for sets they think should be available. If 10,000 people vote for an idea, it is then reviewed further.

One idea was submitted by Dr Ellen Kooijman, a geochemist in Stockholm.

"As a female scientist I had noticed two things about the available Lego sets: a skewed male/female minifigure ratio and a rather stereotypical representation of the available female figures. It seemed logical that I would suggest a small set of female minifigures in interesting professions to make our Lego city communities more diverse." wrote Kooijman.

"We're very excited to release Ellen Kooijman's Female Minifigure set, featuring three scientists, now entitled 'Research Institute' as our next Lego Ideas set. This awesome model is an inspiring set that offers a lot for kids as well as adults." (Lego)

Earlier Lego mini-figures were gender neutral but this has changed over time. New mini-figures being launched?

- Male: constable, barbarian, mountain climber, island warrior.
- Female: female robot, pretzel girl, diner waitress, grandma.

"Denmark, where Lego is based, is famed for being better at gender equality than most other countries. Yet this year, Lego has produced a toy range that has traditional alpha male heroes and traditional helpless females." (Helen Czerski, *The Guardian*, June 6).

I don't know about helpless; I think it's worse. The new female mini-figures of robot, diner waitress, pretzel girl, grandma have a decided women-to-serve theme.

I intend to write a protest to the Lego Ideas site because I think that this message is offensive,

Lorraine Inglis



Notices

Edna Ryan Awards

Just letting you know that the 2014 Edna Ryan Awards will be held at the Sydney Trades Hall in Sydney on Friday, 17 October – see www.ednaryan.net.au and our Facebook page. Nominations will close on 12 September and nomination forms will be circulated and available by 1 August. Flyers with details will also be circulated by that date.

Bobbie Burke
The Edna Ryan Committee



End of an Era party

This is an early invitation. OWN has been moved out of Windmill Street and the Rocks will be undergoing major changes. New accommodation will be needed I don't believe we should go out with a whimper, but with a bang, A BIG BANG. So the Sydney OWN party will be a little earlier, on Thursday, November 27, in Mott Hall. Why Mott Hall? We'll need more space to hold all those who would like to come.

END OF NOVEMBER, END OF THE YEAR, END OF AN ERA PARTY!

Lorraine Inglis
Chair, Sydney OWN



Jessie Street Library lunch hour talk

Southern Function Room, Town Hall House, 456 Kent St, 12-1.30pm. \$16 members, \$22 non-members. Sandwich lunch included.

AUGUST 21, Dianne Ottley: *Grace Crowley - Discovery of an overlooked Australian woman artist.*

Grace Crowley was one of the 500 women artists identified by Professor Joan Kerr in her book published in 1995, *Heritage: National Women's Art Book 500 women artists from colonial times to 1955*, as having been overlooked by Australian art historians. While studying for her BA in Art History and Theory from 1998 to 2002, Dianne took part in the first course based on this book.



Politics in the Pub

Thursday nights, 6.30-8.15pm, Harold Park Hotel.

August 14: *After Mandela - What Now for South Africa?*

August 21: *Indigenous Australians - The gap is not closing. Why?*

August 28: *Update on Cuba.*



Budget Protest Contacts

Treasurer - Hon Joe Hockey
J.Hockey.MP@aph.gov.au

Minister for Social Services

Hon Kevin Andrews
Kevin.Andrews.MP@aph.gov.au

Minister for Indigenous Affairs

Senator Nigel Scullion
senator.scullion@aph.gov.au

Leader of Opposition

Hon Bill Shorten
Bill.Shorten.MP@aph.gov.au

Deputy leader Tanya Plibersek
Tanya.Plibersek.MP@aph.gov.au

OWN Book club list

Monday, August 18: *The Little Old Lady Who Broke All The Rules* by Catharina Ingelman-Sundberg.

Monday, September 15: *The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd. If you can't get a specified book, please let me know. Happy reading. Newcomers welcome.

Anne-Marie Kestle
0408740435.



Wellness activities

OWN also offers a number of very affordable Wellness activities at various locations during school terms. Ring the contact person listed for more information.

BLACKTOWN: Rooty Hill Senior Citizens Centre, 34a Rooty Hill Road, Rooty Hill.

Tuesdays: Hoy & Bingo, Gentle Exercise and Ukulele.

Wednesdays: Drop in for a cuppa and Line Dancing.

Fridays: Drumming & Tai Chi.

Monthly bus trips & more! Ring Coral on 9631 3289 or Pam on 9675 7836.

SUTHERLAND:

Pensioners Centre, 749a Old Princes Hwy, Sutherland.

Mondays: Tai Chi, Strengthening Ex, Meditation, Feldenkrais.

Wednesdays: Tai Chi, Gentle Exercise, Drumming & Book Club. Speakers, courses and more!

Ring Noreen on 9545 3489.

ILLAWARRA:

Coniston Community Hall, Bridge Street, Coniston (near train station & parking available).

Mondays: Tai Chi, International Dancing, Drumming & Gentle Exercise.

Tuesdays: Relaxation/Meditation, Thai Yoga & Ukulele.

Ring Barbara on 0406 627 493 or Sheila on 4228 7840.

BANKSTOWN:

Bankstown PCYC, Cnr French Ave & Meredith St.

Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Activities include: Gentle Yoga, Gent Exercise, Drumming, "Let's Talk About" (Discussion), International Dancing, Guided Relaxation & more!

Ring Diane on 9708 2245.

NORTHSIDE:

The Annex, Dougherty Centre, 7 Victor St, Chatswood.

Tuesdays: Mums with Drums.

Wednesdays: Feldenkrais, Discussion, Book Club & Qi Gong. Ring: 9415 2474, 9419 6417 or 0400 630 089.



ACTIVITIES

MEMBERS & FRIENDS WELCOME TO ATTEND

Lost Ladies

10am every Wed (during school terms), exploring various locations or topics of interest. Contact Annette Butterfield 9665 5369. Email: abutterfield_852@hotmail.com

Film Discussion Group

You are invited on **Tuesday August 12** to see *Charlie's Country*. Contact Yetty on 9665 2050 for more information.

Bondi Junction Coffee and Gossip Group

11am - last Friday in each month. The Coffee Shop, Eastern Suburbs Leagues Club (enter from 93-98 Spring St. You must sign in.) Contact Yetty 9665 2050 to check all details.

Book Club

MON, AUG 18 - *The Little Old Lady Who Broke All The Rules* by Catharina Ingelman-Sundberg. 12.30pm at 87 Lower Fort St. Come at 12 with a sandwich for lunch.

MON, SEPT 15 - *The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd. 12.30pm at 87 Lower Fort St. Come at 12 with a sandwich for lunch.

Aboriginal Support Circle

Next meeting August 11 at 10.30am. Annie Green Court, cnr Elizabeth and Redfern St, to visit activist Kaye Mindine. Confirm details with Pat Zinn on 9389 1090, or email pattzinn1@hotmail.com

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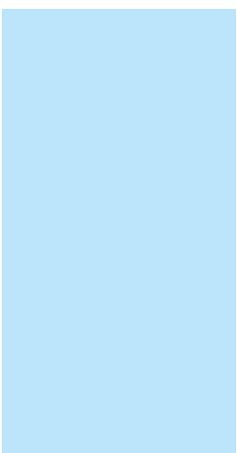
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