



# OWN **matters**

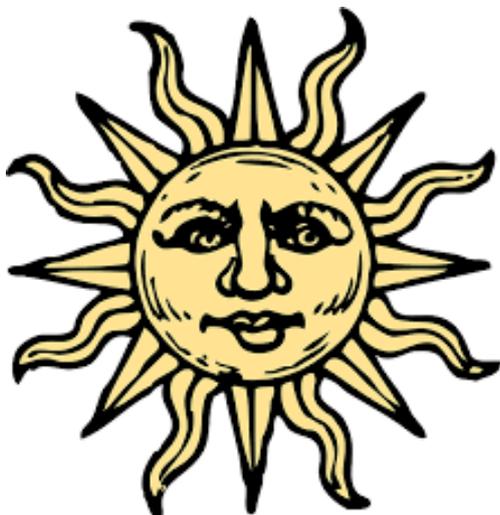
THE *voice* OF *strong independent older women* IN NSW

## *From the Chair...*

I do apologise that we have not had a regular newsletter every two months. At the moment, the job of getting it produced is up to Helen Dunne (admin.) and me, so please bear with us as we get into a routine. We will commence the next newsletter in 2016 with a new editor so we can return to our normal routine of bi-monthly editions.

By the time you receive this newsletter, Newtown Wellness would have been launched. Congratulations to Marnie and Helen for all the work they have done to make this possible. They have a 6 week program with a variety of activities which should give us an idea of what will be worthwhile to continue into the New Year.

A big thank you to all of those members who helped with a very big clean- up at the office.



The office was quite cluttered with lots of falling apart and very old furniture. We have replaced much of the furniture which has made the office a more friendly and comfortable work place. We have also bought lounge room furniture so we now have one corner of the room as a comfortable and relaxing spot.

I have had a couple of invitations to visit some of the groups and would love to visit you all in the new year. Please let me know the day and time you would like me to visit.

On behalf of Marnie and Helen, I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

**Annette Bray**

You are invited to Sydney OWN

ANNUAL SOLSTICE LUNCH

**Monday 21 DECEMBER 11am.**

8-10 Victoria Street Newtown

Be entertained by the Tokens who will lead us in a sing-along and bring a plate for feasting and your favourite songs for singing!

RSVP Cate on 9428 2905

[cturne@ozemail.com](mailto:cturne@ozemail.com)

## *Let's talk about Death and Dying*

This is not always a good idea. For so long death had been the domain of religion but these days it has become the domain of medicine. The idea is to keep us alive as long as possible. This is not always the best outcome for some people. At the heart of modern medicine is a conflict about the place and meaning of death in human life (Callahan, Hastings Centre Report, 1993).

I am sure we all hope that when it is time for us to die we will one night go to sleep and not wake up. Unfortunately this only happens for a small percentage of us. If this happens or we become very ill or get dementia and are unable to state what we want, we must make sure that our family is aware of our wishes. Do you want to be cremated or buried? Have you a preference of undertakers? My grandfather was adamant that Butlers from Campbelltown conduct his funeral. Do you want a church service or just a service at the cemetery or crematorium? If you want a church service what hymns would you like to be sung? This is so helpful for whoever is organizing the celebration of your life.

We also need to talk about end of life decisions if we become ill. So many of us avoid this conversation. Throughout our lives, especially as we grow older, we become more conscious that death is inevitable. Unfortunately most of us put it at the back of our minds. Not only don't we want to talk about it we don't want to think about it.

As we age we read more and more in newspapers the death notice of relatives, friends and acquaintances. We receive little support from contemporary society for our endeavor to face death in life. Our Western culture conspires against us acknowledging its inevitability. It is important that we have respect for others, particularly your loved ones. This can be carried out by having an Advance Care Plan. Advance Care Planning is not about euthanasia, but directions on how your loved ones and health professionals care for you in your hour of need. An Advance Care Plan or living will is a document that lets people state their wishes for end-of-life medical care, in case they are unable to communicate their wishes. NSW health has a great website with a suggested form for advance care planning. The web site is: [advancecareplanning.org.au/resources/new-south-wales](http://advancecareplanning.org.au/resources/new-south-wales).

If, we can accept death as part of life, not just as the end of life, living and dying becomes inseparable. Rather than a shadow that hovers over life, death becomes the light that illuminates life (Barbato 2002). **Annette Bray**

### ***I Want the Choice***

I am a life member of Dying with Dignity. I am on the DWD committee and a member of the Voluntary Euthanasia Party. The first half of my working life was in office administration and those experiences shaped my desire to work in social justice. I was 49 before I went to university for the first time. The last half of my working life was basically all about social justice as a union industrial officer and a delegate; as a conciliation officer with the Human Rights Commission and as an industrial investigator. My late partner had a rare heart condition so he and I were forced to focus on his possible imminent death on many occasions. We joined Dying with Dignity NSW in the early 1990s and we became life members in 1999. I am now on that committee. Bob had lots of emergency admissions to hospital via ambulance and we heard frequent excruciating, screaming moaning deaths so he became extremely apprehensive about the manner of his death although he wasn't worried about the destination. Bob died nearly eight years ago and I am pleased that he died at home, with my arm around him, in a very speedy manner.

Approximately 20 years ago I was diagnosed with COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease also known as emphysema), because I am an ex-smoker. This means I have had to face my mortality on several occasions when I have had out of control lung infections and pneumonia. I've had a several trips to hospital and been obliged to use oxygen to supplement my breathing. Although my condition is currently well managed it will gradually deteriorate and ultimately I will not be breathing. I will be gurgling so I have the same concerns about the manner of my death.

Sadly I am very aware that not all pain can be controlled by today's drugs and the palliative care processes. For people in that circumstance, and for whom the future is intolerable, and who are mentally competent to make the decision, assisted death should be a real, dignified and viable option.

With proper safeguards in place it will not be a slippery slope. It is not compulsory for those who do not want to take that option but they should not be able to control my choice.

Without assisted dying legislation our community is imposing prolonged agony and misery on some people as well as forcing the families and friends of those people to participate in their distress and anxiety. And this suffering can last for months and even years. I want the choice of voluntary euthanasia because it is the humane option for some and I believe it is a fundamental human right. Let's treat people as well as we treat our pets. **Judith Daley**

**Should you need advice about coping with your situation there are lots of places to seek help. Find someone to help you or phone 24 hour support available from Lifeline 13 11 14**

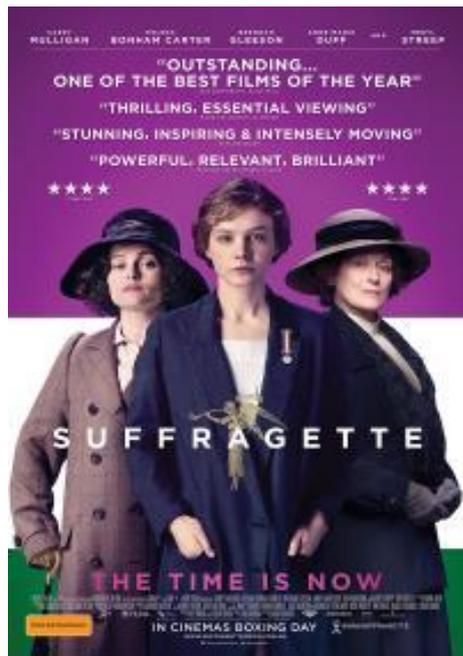
### ***OWN NSW Quarterly Meeting***

The Quarterly Meeting, hosted by Sydney OWN, was recently held at OWN's Newtown head office on Thursday 26 November. The meeting attracted a healthy attendance with OWN members from a range of groups. We were entertained by the Sutherland Dames who amused and charmed us with witty songs and dance. The infectious enthusiasm of the Dames epitomizes the spirit of OWN and we hope they inspire others to actively engage within their groups.

The special guest speaker for the meeting was Rodney Lewis, a Sydney solicitor who single-handedly turned the attention of the Australian legal community to the need for the law to address elder abuse, matters regarding end of life, and the treatment of elders in aged care facilities. In addition to researching, writing and lecturing on the topic, Rodney has written an academic text titled Elder Law (2004 Lexis Nexus).

Rodney has a strong commitment to human rights and was involved in seeking justice for the five Australian journalists who were killed in Balibo in East Timor in 1975. Rodney's talk was informative and engaging and we are grateful to have had the privilege of his time and sharing of his expert knowledge.

The Barbara Malcom Quilt Raffle was drawn at this meeting and we are thrilled to announce that the winner is Jane Mears. Jane was informed of her win just before she embarked on her trip to the Northern Hemisphere. Congratulations Jane!



**COMPETITION!** We have three double-pass giveaways open to any OWN member who submits a written account of their positive experience of being an OWN member. Stories should be 250-500 words in length and the selected winning stories will be published in the next edition of OWN Matters. Stories must be typed and submitted via email or post by 15 December 2015 to: [info@ownsw.org.au](mailto:info@ownsw.org.au) or post to 8-10 Victoria St Newtown NSW 2042

## **Group Reports**

### **Nowra**

Last November we hosted the Regional Birthday Lunch at the Wesley Centre in Nowra. Numbers were smaller than in previous years as some Committees are finding their older members are unable to travel distances. However the mood was buoyant and there was a genuine interest in aspirations and activities of members from regional groups. Our guest speaker was Ray Beckham, chaplain from the Corrective Services and our entertainment came from the harmonious voices of a local choir. Lunch was delicious and the efforts of the providers were well appreciated. We can all benefit from these get-together and exchange of ideas.

This year we are embarking on a project to improve the Disabled Car parking facilities in the Shoalhaven CBD and outlying villages. The Shoalhaven Council are aware that 23% of the residents here are over 65 and one in 5 hold disabled car parking permits. The State Planning Authority state that the ratio for special carparks is 1/100. Shoalhaven Council does better than that, but this year is conducting a study to improve these facilities. Nowra OWN are participating in a lobby group –People for Access –to advise and assist the Council in this mission.

We thought other OWN groups may be interested in investigating special car park facilities in their municipalities. Our big project—the research and compilation of the HISTORY of NOWRA OWN –from 1992-2015, has been completed and launched by one of the original founder, Anne Warren, at a celebratory lunch. We are delighted with the publication and pleased with such a worthwhile achievement. The South Coast Register covered the publicity and we plan to donate copies to the local library, the State and Mitchell libraries and OWN Sydney.

**Joan Bray, Publicity Officer for Nowra OWN**

## **Theatre Group**

The Theatre Group is alive and well. We performed on fifteen occasions through 2015, the highlight being our housing show “Ma, it’s time to Move” at the National Folk Festival in Canberra, which we performed to an appreciative and enthusiastic audience. This was our second NFF triumph: in 2014 we wowed the audience with “Don’t Knock Your Granny”. We should acknowledge Joan Modder’s tireless enthusiasm for the project and her persistence in getting it on to the list, no mean feat.

Finally on Nov 10 we had a grand Reunion Lunch for all past and present members of the Theatre Group in our Newtown premises. It was such a pleasure to meet up with long-time friends, smiling faces, lots of conversations and laughter, ending with ‘champagne’ (organic, of course), a celebration cake with the title of a song written for us way back by Bernice Lynch, musician extraordinaire, inscribed in icing on top to remind us that we are Never Too Old. There were twenty-five of us at the lunch, with apologies and good-will messages from those who couldn’t be there.

We also looked back with respect and affection on the members who are no longer with us. In this year we have fare-welled three stalwarts of the Theatre Group and of OWN: Vale Joy Ross, Judith Mustard and Merle Hight.

As an impromptu gesture of thanks, our past members (plus me; can't resist a chance to get in on the act) sang the number we opened our shows with for many years, "We're Making Whoopee", with Peggy Hewett in the lead. Peg is not just our 'longest serving' Theatre Group member, she is its FOUNGING MEMBER to whom we owe our very existence and were so fortunate to have with us.

One of the Theatre Group's strengths is that we make a good team and this occasion was no exception. Each of us made ourselves helpful in some way, either with prep in the kitchen, moving chairs around in readiness, or making sure our former Theatre Group members were welcomed and introduced to the more recent ones. We were also honoured to have our No.1 Ticket Holder and Patron, Cate Turner, with us in the midst of her busy timetable of responsibilities.

Now our performing year is coming to a close, with one performance to go. Our membership stands at twelve on-stage performers and one invaluable musician; sometimes we have the assistance of Jonnie to direct, at others we are lucky to have Joan and Denise, who put the scripts for MA and CABARET together, 'out front' to control us. We would really welcome someone with skills in choreography and singing to direct us full time.

Finally, I'd like to add a word of congratulations to the office team, in particular, Marnie who grappled with Ikea put-it-together furniture, for transforming our new space from something of a dumping ground for all manner of items into a bright and pleasant environment, with a corner of comfortable chairs and sofas to relax in. Thanks to everyone who helped with the transformation: it was worth it!

**Brigid Sen**

## Northside Wellness

I am a member of Older Women's Network Northside Wellness. The Older Women's Network was formed in 1987 when a group of older women in the Combined Pensioners Association saw the need for a network which would focus on the interests and concerns of older women. Over the years many groups have been formed. The aim of all groups is to promote the rights, dignity and well-being of older women. In 1993 it was decided to promote the well-being of older women and so what became Wellness Centres were formed at a number of places. As with Men's groups the government gave a grant for these groups to be formed and Northside Wellness began with a paid coordinator shortly after. Northside Wellness meets every Wednesday during school term at the Dougherty Centre.

When I first joined I questioned the reason for meeting only during school term. I hazard a guess that quite often we are required to look after grandchildren. I was at a meeting with members of other groups last week and my belief about school holidays was confirmed for we grandmothers are often called on during these holidays. Our day starts at 10am with Feldenkrais for an hour, then after a cup of tea we will either have a guest speaker, once a month a book club and a couple of times during the term the members will socialise while sewing special cushions. After lunch we do Qi Gong.

Feldenkrais, what is that exactly? It is a form of exercise that helps us be aware of our bodies through movement. Each week the lesson is ably led by Christine Heberlein, a physiotherapist. Each new member is asked to fill in form stating any problems that may hinder the member in any way during the lesson. Each lesson is different and it is expected that the lessons will improve co-ordination, enhance physical and mental balance and improve balance and posture. As we get older balance can become a problem and I know that doing Feldenkrais for the last 6years has improved my balance very much.

From 11.15am to 12.15pm we do a variety of things. We have had a variety of guest speakers from the history of Chatswood to dieticians and anything in between. But mostly talks that effect and interest us older women. Sprinkled between this is the monthly book club which has become a very popular event. I mentioned cushions earlier. This is a project we have been doing for a couple of years. We

make cushions for women who have had breast cancer and have gone through the trauma of a mastectomy. These cushions have been a great comfort to many women. We do this on behalf of the Zonta Club, a women's service club, and we supply the Mater Hospital with at least 30 cushions a month. All the members believe this is a very worthwhile project.

From 12.15 to 1pm we meet down stairs at the cafeteria for lunch. At 1pm some of us join John Saw, a master of Qi Gong for an hour of exercises. The purist will tell you that Qi Gong is the energy of the body that travels through the network of meridians and connects with the energy of the universe. For us who do it each Wednesday it is a form of exercise that helps with our breathing, regulating our posture, learning to stand, sit or move with the body in a relaxed way.

We are always looking for new members as those of us who meet regularly have realised that the activities we do help us mentally, emotionally as well as physically. I was handed a flyer on my local bus and so I joined because I had just moved into the area and hoping to meet new people. I have to say that I have met some wonderful women who I can now call my friends. Others because their GP may have suggested they join, or they may feel now they have retired and are missing social contact that came with employment. There are many reasons but we welcome all women. **Annette Bray**

### ***PHOENIX RISING***

For many months, sadness over the looming likelihood that OWN NSW and OWN SYDNEY might have reached their final moment gave me an unexpected sense of loss. I knew I'd miss the freedom to drop in to the Lower Fort Street office, a place which had become a kind of psychological home and I'd certainly miss the friendly ambience of the Windmill Street property where so many happy times were spent by OWN's 'Lost Ladies' of which I am long-term member.

During that period of unknowing, dismay filled me each time I heard rumours mixed with indisputable facts over OWN's uncertain future. I made a visit earlier this year to OWN's new accommodation, which, being situated in a quiet back street in Newton hidden from the energy and colour of King

Street, only added to my doubt about OWN's survival. So much remained to be experienced, analysed and determined. The task seemed insuperable.

Added to that was the cessation of OWN's much-loved newsletter, 'Own Matters,' perhaps the most important link holding all members of OWN NSW together as it absorbed, informed and reminded us that no matter how difficult life can be, we were not alone and that caring, capable older women were 'out there' doing battle on our behalf. Reconstituting both OWN and 'Own Matters' was not going to be an easy task. Behind the scenes, loyal and committed women were battling losses of front-line staff and volunteers. No sooner had a promising candidate astonished the leading strategists with her capacities than another crisis had arisen to sweep her away.

But, when the first edition of 'Own Matters' for many months appeared, well presented and richly informative, my hopes that all was not lost began to rise. I telephoned the OWN office hoping that this time someone would answer and I was rewarded. The calm voice of Marnie Fitzpatrick, employed for only two days at the time of my call, confidently informed me that the OWN NSW AGM would indeed take place two days later. I resolved to attend.

On 27th August I made my way along crowded King Street before turning into the quiet backstreet and finally reaching the open door of the new OWN premises. The atmosphere in the large meeting space reverberated to the sound of warm greetings, cheerful conversation and an intangible but inescapable sense of optimism. By the time all were seated listening to our guest speaker on the topic of road safety for seniors, there were about 50 women present. It felt so good to be among them, a whole crowd of us dealing with the challenges of ageing yet all full of energy, enthusiasm for OWN's continuing existence and sharing companionship and compassion with one another.

The AGM itself was at times rowdy as members, now really fired up, worked to set the future year in place. Reports were attended to closely, election of office bearers worked through with patience and good humour despite frequent reference to complex constitutional rules, several delightful Theatre group sketches group were roundly applauded and the superb buffet lunch was devoured with gusto.

That provided further time to reconnect with old friends not seen for many months and to meet and get to know new faces.

I came away from the meeting not only hopeful for OWN's future, but quietly grateful. I felt I had come home. The sense of comradeship among the women only strengthened my belief that we all really desire OWN to keep going, for OWN provides us not only with skillful advocates for older women but also with psychological support as we make our way into the future as older women with renewed strength and confidence. I wish our leaders every success as I rejoice that out of the ashes of the past, the OWN phoenix has risen. **Bev Cameron**



**Aboriginal Circles of Support** began in 1994. Our motivation then was, and is now, to mend the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, and we realised that in order to do that we needed to gain knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island history, customs and culture.

We thank Pat Zinn who is the Coordinator of our Aboriginal Circles of Support Program for providing the following interesting and informative articles.

### **School Attendances Soar with Radical Turnaround**

In Tennant Creek, in the Barkly region of the Northern Territory, school attendance rates in the region used to be desperately low. The Papula Aparr-Kari (PAK) language centre members took the initiative and set up a program in July, 2014, consulting with 28 agencies involved with children in the area plus talking with many traditional owners and a massive number of parents, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. It was found that the main drivers of school absenteeism included poverty, transiency, bullying, mental health issues, poor hygiene, overcrowding and the language barrier.

Many children were living with an older sister or brother or grandmother because their parents were unable to look after them. There was so much information that the University of New South Wales was approached to assist.

A discussion paper titled *Let's Make it Better For the Future*, found that a new approach was needed from the whole community. The schools needed to be made more friendly and the school staff needed to feel welcomed. There was a need to work towards better housing, getting drunks off the streets and more safety. Now PAK is working with health centres, schools, and liaising with the whole community, resulting in a huge turnaround!

### **Tackling the Cancer Gap**

For the first time in Australia, the Minister for Health, Susan Ley, has come together with Indigenous communities, health providers, cancer control organisations and researchers to establish an agreed, nationally-coordinated approach to tackling cancer in Indigenous people, who are 30% more likely to die from cancer than non-Indigenous Australians.

An amount of \$350,000 has been promised to raise awareness about lung cancer, in particular, and improve access to timely diagnosis and optimal, culturally appropriate treatment and care. Improving knowledge, attitudes and outcomes is to be addressed, as well as involving, informing and supporting families and carers and strengthening cancer-related services to meet needs.

### ***From the Wellness Desk...***

#### **Wellness through Nature Connection**

Interaction with the natural environment is foundational to human wellbeing [1]. For much of our evolutionary development, humans have been intimately immersed in the natural world. As hunter gatherers, we were sustained both physically and spiritually by connecting with the rhythms and cycles of nature.



Over subsequent millennia, the evolution of agriculture, mechanisation, industry and capitalism directed a shift in collective consciousness. A world view evolved where nature is no longer revered as intrinsic, valuable and spiritual. Nature has become an object of belonging, to be freely exploited and controlled.

As urbanisation has swept the planet, we have moved indoors to live, work and play. We travel in motorised transport from one air conditioned space to another, occupy our leisure time with consumeristic pursuits and connect with each other via digital devices. Our evolutionary development simply cannot keep pace with our technological development. We have disconnected from nature, and in doing so, diminished our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellness [2].

The good news is that it is not too late to reconnect and there is large amount of research that illustrates the wellness benefits of doing so. Increased contact with nature is associated with increased positive emotions, happiness, vitality and personal growth, as well as an increase in the ability to find meaning, purpose and life satisfaction [3].

Nature connects us to each other by promoting positive responses such as love, empathy, altruism and generosity. In contrast, spending time in man-made environments orients us toward pursuits of self-interest [4].

Connecting with nature benefits mental wellness too. Walking within a natural environment has been shown to enhance mood and decrease anxiety, aggression and anger [5, 6]. Being in the presence of nature assists people to regulate negative emotions and restore calmness, positivity and ability to focus [7].

It is not necessary to 'go bush' to experience the wellness benefits of nature. Simply being in the presence of our many beautiful parks, gardens, forests, beaches and waterways will provide you with your daily dose of 'Vitamin N'. Spending time in your local park, the predominant source of nature contact for many urban dwellers, can reduce stress levels and increase your sense of wellbeing [8].

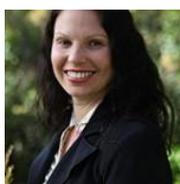
Try reconnecting with the earth by getting out in your home or community garden. Gardening offers physiological health benefits such as lowering the risk of cardiovascular disease and improving outcomes for diabetes patients [9]. Gardening has also been shown to alleviate mental fatigue, reduce stress and enhance capacity for relaxation and sleep [10].

Even appreciating views of nature from your window can promote a restorative affect and an increased sense of internal peace [11]. Nature views from hospital windows have been found to promote faster recovery and reduce anxiety in patients [12].

Nature is part of us and we are part of nature. When we disconnect from nature, we are in fact disconnecting from ourselves. Given that it is intrinsic to our wellbeing, free, and widely accessible, nature is an underutilised public health resource. Don't wait for your doctor to prescribe a therapeutic dose, find your own way to reconnect with nature today. **Marnie Fitzpatrick**

*(References available on request)*

## Moving Generously into the World



*Jessica Stead facilitates a discussion group on living a positive and healthy life as part of the Newtown Wellness Centre's Activities Program. Jessica has been working as a freelance writer since 2009. She completed a BA in Communications (Social Inquiry) in 2006, and then went on to achieve First Class Honours in 2007 for her thesis on the role of hope in the lives of refugees.*

Some weeks you can feel so busy and frantic that the idea of giving of your time and energy for free can seem counter intuitive, or simply impossible amidst your jam packed schedule. However, it might be worth thinking about as volunteering has proven to not only help individuals and communities, but also offers volunteers a significant boost to their health and wellbeing.

It is undeniable the amazing work that volunteers do in the community and the positive impact they have on people's lives. You only need to look as far as the communities that have experienced floods and bushfires recently to know that without people's generosity and willingness to volunteer their

time and skills, there would have been many people left stranded, hungry and more importantly, without hope.

By choosing to give of your time, energy and skills, you are choosing to see your life and the world from a place of abundance rather than scarcity. This extension of care and concern that you offer when you volunteer has a direct impact on communities and the development of hope.

I have had the privilege over the past year to work in a position where I have overseen a group of volunteers who tutor at a homework support program for refugee and migrant young people. The dedication they have shown to the students has been inspiring. Some volunteers have been tutoring with the program for eight years and have seen students move through high school and into university degrees.

While my job was to make sure the program ran smoothly, it was the volunteers who really made the program happen. Without the volunteers there wouldn't have been a program and the students who benefit so greatly from the support would have gone without.

The twenty volunteers I worked with made up such a small percentage of the millions of Australians who are volunteering, yet they were able to have such a big impact on the students' lives and the community. It goes to show how much social change and good can be achieved when people join together for a common cause.

When you volunteer you have a chance to step outside your own life and to gain a new perspective on your circumstances and how other people live. This stepping outside of yourself has a significant flow on effect for your health. Research has shown that volunteers experience better health than those who don't volunteer, and even gain more benefits, socially and physically, than those they help. Volunteering helps to reduce stress in people's lives and in turn reduces the risk of disease.

It probably comes as no surprise that volunteering can boost your physical and mental wellbeing because volunteering provides a greater sense of purpose in your life, connections with others and a feeling that you are making a difference in the world.

Any time that you can give to volunteering is worthwhile and is making a difference in the world. There is choice to either volunteer on a regular basis, sign up for one off events or even to volunteer overseas. Whichever way you choose to volunteer, the most important thing is to move beyond your own life and move generously into the world. As the famous saying by Paul Shane Spear goes, 'As one person I cannot change the world, but I can change the world of one person.' **Jessica Stead**

## **Vale**



### **Joy Ross (9 Aug 1934 – 6 Jun 2015)**

I met Joy in 1993 when she was the volunteer coordinator of the Older Women's Network at The Rocks and I was employed as the Community Worker. Joy was a creative, inspired and feisty colleague who also, over time, became a loved and highly valued friend.

Joy's involvement with OWN began in 1988 when she was 54. For the next two decades she dedicated herself to nurturing political awareness and encouraging social activism in older women – both within the organisation and beyond. She also worked to create an environment that was warm and welcoming and personally enriching for members of OWN.

In 1999 Joy was appointed International Year of Older Persons (IYOP) coordinator. She worked tirelessly to ensure that gender issues were on every agenda and that strategies were developed to address the diverse needs of older women. One of her own strategies was getting together a small contingent of OWN marchers for that years' Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras!

Joy was born and grew up in Western Australia. She trained as a nurse, then married and moved to Newcastle where her two daughters, Eleanor (deceased 2008) and Natalie were born. She also cared for her husband's young cousin for five years when her own children were infants.

In the mid-60s, with her marriage over, Joy began work at the Communist Party's Intervention Bookshop. She quickly became captivated by progressive social and political changes then sweeping the country – the anti-Vietnam War movement, the peace movement and later on, Women's Liberation.

Despite ill health, which began in 2006 with a diagnosis of cancer followed by many years of treatments, Joy continued to participate in OWN activities, attending conferences, social events, book discussions and meetings. She regularly met friends for coffee and a chat and shows at the Belvoir.

Joy died peacefully in a nursing home with her daughter Natalie by her side and her life partner Fran close by.

With her non-judgemental nature and willingness to help where ever she saw a need, Joy was a friend to many women, lesbian and straight. She was a woman who made a real difference in the lives of many of us.

However, Joy did have a blind spot. When anyone expressed appreciation for her contributions and achievements she would be totally dismissive, claiming it was others who deserved the accolades, not her.

This could be Joy's epitaph: a magnificent woman with a gentle soul who achieved so much more in this life than she would ever let herself – or anyone else – acknowledge. **Dorothy Cora**

### **Lurline Simpson OAM (1929 – 2015)**

Lurline Dorothy Simpson OAM, who died peacefully earlier this year, was a member of our Aboriginal Support Circle, "a woman of great substance."

Born in 1929 during the time of the Great Depression, the second of 4 children, she excelled at school but there was no money for further education. From an early age, her father instilled in her that regardless of gender, race or community standing, all people are equal.

At the age of 18 she married Frank Simpson and they made their home in Peakhurst, where they became active community members. They had 2 children, Elizabeth and Steve, and not only was Lurline a working mother, but she drove a car and was an activist, attending meetings, protest marches and rallies. Her main interests were within the Peace Movement, child endowment for mothers and equal rights for women, followed later by her membership of an interfaith group and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Lurline and Frank were lifelong members of the Labor Party for which they had a deep lifelong commitment, combined with a deep Christian faith.

She was honoured many times for community involvement awards and recognitions for service. Not only that, after Steve moved to Indonesia, Lurline studied and then taught the Indonesian language. Selamat jalan, Lurline, you are greatly missed, it was an honour to know you. **Pat Zinn**

### ***OWN Activities in & around Sydney***

**Lost Ladies** – 10am every Wed (during school terms), exploring various locations or topics of interest. Contact Annette Butterfield 9665 5369. Email: abutterfield\_852@ 18otmail.com

**Film Discussion Group** – You are invited to join us on the second Tuesday of each month. Contact Yetty on 9665 2050 for more information.

**Bondi Junction Coffee and Gossip Group** – 11am – last Friday in each month. Lunch, Eastern Suburbs Leagues Club (enter from 93-98 Spring St. You must sign in.) Contact Yetty on 9665 2050 for details.

**Book Club** – Mondays at 12 at OWN NSW Newtown Head Office. Bring your lunch to eat while we share our thoughts. For details call Anne-Marie Kestle on 0408 740 435.

**Aboriginal Support Circle** – Contact Pat Zinn 9389 1090 or email pazzinn1@hotmail.com

## The Older Women's Network of NSW (OWN)

8-10 Victoria Street Newtown NSW 2042

T: 02 9519 8044

E: [info@ownnsw.org.au](mailto:info@ownnsw.org.au)

[www.ownnsw.org.au](http://www.ownnsw.org.au)

**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 6 times a year. The Newsletter is available free of charge to any OWN member who would like to receive it via email. Printed and posted copies are available for an annual subscription of \$20.

**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 [info@ownnsw.org.au](mailto:info@ownnsw.org.au)

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