



# OWN MATTERS

AGM Conference. Shameful Treatment of Asylum Seekers.

Think Globally, Act Locally. Vale Joyce Stevens. Such Celebration.

Not Just a Labour of Love. Those Years at OWN. Gear Shift.

Triumph at Trocadero. Why I fly Qantas. By Women for Women.



## Vision and Vitality

Accolades for new book on OWN's colourful and inspiring history by member Dorothy Cora



## Backlash to federal budget

Call to members to protest the proposed changes in the 2014 budget. They will have a huge impact on the elderly.



## By Women For Women

Constance Stone fought for women's rights to be doctors and opened the first hospital staffed by women.



## Vale Joyce Stevens

Joyce was an important historical figure, a feminist, writer and social activist. She has died aged 86.



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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 \$30 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](mailto:newsletter@ownnsw.org.au).**

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

## The Team

### Editorial Team

Lorraine Inglis, June West, and Anna Logan.

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*More help always welcome!*

## 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**

### The Costs to the Aged

**F**rom July 2017 the twice-yearly increases to the Aged Pensions will be linked to the CPI rather than to male wages. This will lead to a reduction in the pension, as the CPI is always the lower of these two calculations. I don't know how much that will cost each of us, but Treasury expects they'll save nearly \$450 million over 4 years.

Furthermore, up to now both Centrelink and Veterans' Affairs clients have received a twice-yearly income support payment. This is to be abolished.

Another loss we pensioners will experience, that hasn't had much coverage, but is very valuable to us, is State and Local Government concessions support totalling \$1.3 billion over 4 years.

As the Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association says "This funding contributes to pensioners' state and territory energy rebates, transport concessions and council rate rebates, which keep many pensioners afloat. But the funding cut will pressure the states and territories to slash these concessions, not least



because they will also have to find \$80 billion to fund hospitals and schools."

While reinstating the fuel excise will add to the living costs of the whole population, in the long run it's probably the only move towards cutting carbon emissions that we see in the budget.

*Anna Logan*



### SOS Save our Services Women's Refuges

**F**or 40 years women's refuges in NSW have provided safety in times of crisis. There are about 90 women's independent, community managed, specialist women's-only refuges and integrated day programs funded by NSW Family and Community Services which appear likely to close by 30

### BUDGET PROTEST CONTACTS

**Treasurer** - Hon Joe Hockey:

[J.Hockey.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:J.Hockey.MP@aph.gov.au)

**Minister for Social Services** -

Hon Kevin Andrews:

[Kevin.Andrews.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Kevin.Andrews.MP@aph.gov.au)

**Minister for Indigenous Affairs**

- Senator Nigel Scullion:

[senator.scullion@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.scullion@aph.gov.au)

**Leader of Opposition**

- Hon Bill Shorten:

[Bill.Shorten.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Bill.Shorten.MP@aph.gov.au)

**Deputy leader** - Tanya Plibersek:

[Tanya.Plibersek.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Tanya.Plibersek.MP@aph.gov.au)

September this year. In Sydney alone 11 women's services are set to close.

The new tender packages issued by the refuges' funder Family and Community Services have not included tenders specifically for women who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness. Instead of providing for women's specialist services, the new model of homeless services will be fewer in number, but larger organisations based on a 'case mix' of homeless men, families, women, young people and children.

Leichhardt Women's Health Centre and many of our

colleague organisations are very concerned that so many women's only refuges in NSW are likely to close. We are extremely worried that four decades of women being able to access safe refuge in expert hands is likely to unravel and that vulnerable women and children will be at risk.

Please ask the Minister and the Premier to reconsider and maintain the funding of women's specialist homelessness services.

*Leichhardt Womens Health Centre*

**CONTACT DETAILS:**

**Minister for Family and Community Services -**

The Hon. Gabrielle Upton, MP:  
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**Premier -**

The Hon. Mike Baird, MP:  
[office@premier.nsw.gov.au](mailto:office@premier.nsw.gov.au)

**Minister for Health -**

The Hon. Jillian Skinner, MP:  
[office@skinner.minister.nsw.gov.au](mailto:office@skinner.minister.nsw.gov.au)



**Speak up**

**I**t is vital that all our concerns, as older women, are conveyed to our local members of Parliament and Ministers with responsibilities for issues that impact on our present and future lives.

They include:

- Temporary Budget Repair Levy of 2% on incomes of \$180,000 and over for only 3 years. A higher tax for longer would have been fairer.
- Young people required to work for the dole, but who is going to



create the jobs? Who is going to support them for six months, whilst they await benefits?

■ Pensions only indexed to the CPI from September 2017 instead of wage movements could reduce it by about \$80 per week within a decade.

■ The co-payment of \$7 for all visits to the doctor, pathology, and imaging will result in deeper poverty for many especially older single women solely dependent on the aged pension.

■ Affordable housing is a major problem for many yet the Budget holds no promise of future funding.

What is so disheartening is the total lack of recognition of the contribution made by a large number of older women to the unpaid work carried out by them as carers and volunteers over a lifetime, and the enormous savings to the budget this represents.

This government has often referred to families as the bedrock of our society, yet fails to recognise the interconnection of caring responsibilities.

*Sonia Laverty*



**The Age of Entitlement is over ... for some**

**W**hose entitlement are we talking about here? It is obviously not the entitlements of wealthy Australians who continue, for example, to avoid tax on their superannuation.

It is the entitlement of ordinary Australians to a fair go.

Everyone must "share the burden". But Australians who are old, young, sick, unemployed, and disabled are being asked to share more of the burden than those who are well-off or wealthy.

The \$7 co-payment for medical care ends universal health care and will most affect the elderly, the chronically ill and people on low incomes: those most needing support.

For pensioners who have no other income, the removal of wage indexation on pensions will push them into poverty. The claim that pensioners are an increasing burden on the economy is fundamental to some of the budget cuts. The fact that pensioners brought up the taxpayers of today, that they funded schools and hospitals and pensions and universities when they were taxpayers is ignored.

Any government that decides that the disadvantaged in the community should fund a budget surplus should lose their entitlement to govern.

*Lorraine Inglis*



# At and Beyond the Rocks

## Change the subject, please!

I was the junior nurse and my first task when I came on for the night shift was to sponge bath and get Mr Bright ready for the night. On that first night I didn't know why Sister giggled as I moved towards his bed.

Mr Bright (who wasn't very) was suffering from a serious confrontation between a tractor, a tree, and his head. He had been in hospital for some time, but the only trouble on his mind seemed to be the size, or the lack of size, of his favourite appendage.

One night he decided that it had been shot off in the war. "Oh," I asked, "was that the 1st or the 2nd World War?" *Why can't 17 year-old Coral keep her mouth shut?*

Mr Bright (who wasn't very) paused in his vigorous scrubbing of said area with a face cloth: "I think it was the 1st World War... or maybe the 2nd." "I think we have done enough work on that area, Mr Bright," said I.

"Please wipe off the soap. And as you are only 46 neither war can be responsible. You'll have to come up with something else." *Why do I have to keep the conversation going?*

The next night Mr Bright (who wasn't very) was sitting straight up in bed. "I've got it, girlie. It was a lion. I remember."

"Well now that could be the answer. Have you been to Africa?" I asked. *See, I just can't keep my trap shut.*

"Oh, no! I haven't been out of Australia. Does that make a difference?"

"Well I should think so Mr Bright."

I decided to put an end to Mr Bright's dilemma and in between the back rub and the neck massage, I asked, "What do you think, Mr Bright? Could it be that when you were a toddler you pulled and played with your appendage so much that its growth was halted?"

"You have it. my girlie, yes, that's it!"

"So can we find another subject to discuss tomorrow night?"

"Yes my girlie, we will. That one's solved now!"

**Coral Littlewood**



## Elements of a Journey: Women and Culture through Photography

In the words of one woman, "This course is not what I expected. It's a course with a difference from other photography classes. We learn more than just taking good images. We learn we can use our creative skills and imaginations. We learn about people, interests, promoting relationships and making friends."

This surpassed any expected outcome hoped for at the completion of Older Women's Network Bankstown Wellness Centre's photography project.

### ***Elements of a Journey: Women and Culture through Photography***

offered women the opportunity to take on the challenge of exploring their cultural awareness and the impact it has on everyday life through the view finder of a camera.

The majority of women wanted to learn how to take good photographs, learn new skills,



*The talented photographers*

huge thank you has to go to Bankstown Sports Club for their support of this project

Yve Lavine, our talented photography teacher, proved to be a perfect choice for this project. Not only was she highly skilled in photography but she had a special way of developing the women's

concept of culture and self image. She provided a wealth of ideas for exploring each person's unique cultural identity while building self confidence and encouraging the imaginations of each participant.

The photographs and the personal growth, the group discussions and sharing of their ideas, enlightened everyone's awareness of the similarities and differences that exist between us and that this needs to be celebrated.

Thank you to the women who joined us for some of the journey but for various reasons, did not continue to the exhibition phase, and to Anna Ortiz, Beryl Driscoll, Ivana Derek, Mary Stuart and Pauline Chen-Miller for seeing their journey through to presenting their work in the Exhibition held at Bankstown Sports Club.

*Diane Brooks*



and get the most out of their camera. Initially the women's concepts of culture was that culture is "how others live their lives." They did not necessarily identify themselves as having their own culture. Over the 10 weeks of the project the women did learn to take some excellent photographs. They also enjoyed the opportunity of being with other women, learning from each other and having fun.

Watching these women working

together, encouraging and empowering each other, seeing the development of their self worth and awareness of their culture and learning and developing new skills was amazing. The crowning glory had to be the look on their faces when their photographic collection was shown to them on their last day.

We were able to get to this point due to our success with our ClubGRANT application, so a



# Aboriginal Support Circle Issues

By Pat Zinn

## Business Degree for Indigenous Students

**I**n August, 2014, the University of Technology of Sydney (UTS) will enrol Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in a new Bachelor of Business Administration degree, the first of its kind in Australia.

There are around 300 companies with forward-looking policies in Australia that want to hire Indigenous university-educated business graduates, but cannot find them and this course aims to promote work readiness and professional direction. It is described as an “underground version of an MBA, offering breadth in all these areas rather than specialisation,” and will be no different from courses studied by non-Indigenous students.

An element about entrepreneurship will be included to help any student who wishes to set up their own business and students will also be able to study further for a Master’s

degree. This new Bachelor of Business Administration degree has been tailored specially for Indigenous people, especially those from social and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. However, the course will be held on the main UTS campus so the business students will mingle with all the other students.

The university aims to enrol about 30 students in its first semester, but the students don’t need to have a specific ATAR score or have finished year 12 to apply. Students will go through the Direct Entry program at the university’s Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning. Each applicant is to be tested, interviewed and assessed and their previous work and life experience considered, to decide whether they have the capability to do the course.

The three-year course includes modules linked with industry in order to gain an understanding of the practical application of business. Each semester will consist of a three-week block

with every day face-to-face with lecturers and continues online, to enable students working full-time to attend and those who do not live in Sydney. This is an exciting new development and we hope universities in other states will set up similar courses.



## Indigenous Fashion Week

**T**he first ever Australian Indigenous Fashion Week took place in April in Sydney, showcasing established and emerging Indigenous designers and models (men and women). The shows featured outfits and accessories using shells, emu feathers, kangaroo skins and native flowers, with clothes based on traditional Aboriginal designs or taking an urban, contemporary approach.

The show was hosted by the Australian Design Initiative, a new not-for-profit organisation representing artists and fashion designers, and also included a design panel hosted by National



Indigenous TV's Karla Grant. Storytelling through fashion was one of the main themes to emerge. A range of industry experts also took part, including designers Sass and Bide, fashion journalist Patty Huntington and Sue Morphet of Manufacturing Australia, discussing the business side of the industry, sustainability, ethics, and creative collaboration. It is hoped that this event will become a permanent fixture as part of Sydney Fashion Week.



### Githabul Women Make a Difference

**F**ive years ago, Githabul women, most of them mothers, at Mulli Mulli in far north-east NSW decided to form an organisation to do something for their children and their community. Since then, the Muli Muli Ladies Aboriginal Corporation have established a community garden, a gym, have secured finances for a basketball court and have completed a good corporate governance course. The NSW government has also granted funding for children's playground equipment.

Still to come are efforts to clean up and beautify their town. Their work has been recognised by other communities, who want to follow Muli Muli's efforts.

Mulli Mulli means trees in the local language while Muli Muli means branches.



### The Budget bites

**A**boriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are amongst the sickest, poorest, and most marginalised Australians, and the budget cuts are disproportionately harsh to those who can least afford it; people who are young, single parents and those suffering ill health and disabilities.

In particular, cuts to preventative health could have a serious impact because of chronic disease management.

Cuts to family violence services will affect more women, as Aboriginal women are 31 times more likely to be hospitalised for assault by their partners, and few people will be able to pay the \$7 fee to visit a doctor.

Indigenous language programs and children's early learning centres are also in danger of being closed, and the only national independent Indigenous representative body, the National Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, has received no funding.

Sadly most Indigenous people will not reach 70 years, so raising the pension age won't have a big impact.







## *Vision & Vitality, Celebrating 25 Years of the Older Women's Network in NSW is a 'must' read.*

*It can be purchased from the OWN office for \$10 or mailed out to you for \$20*

### *A real eye-opener*

When I wanted to join the Theatre Group, I had to first become a member of an organisation which was a women's only network, and that suited me just fine, an organisation for women that was owned by women. I had no idea what the network was all about but wanted to know how it worked, what it did and who were the women who decided matters important to women. I found information from meetings and social gatherings also from a monthly newsletter which all members received. All in all, I thought I knew all I could have learned over the years, having been in OWN for around 13 years.

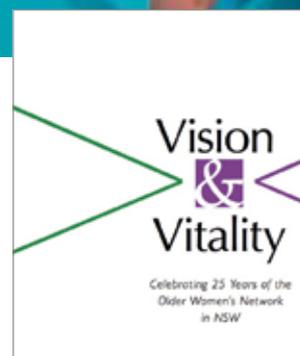
Then, Dorothy Cora wrote a book! It was to celebrate twenty-five years of OWN. She called it *Vision & Vitality* which is what older women have in plenty. When I read the book, I realised how little I knew of the background of OWN, and how many people I had not met but who were working in the background to establish the goals for the Network. I knew some of the women mentioned in the book but had no idea of the contribution some had made to the Network.

In order to know about the various activities of OWN and how they came about, the book is a 'must' read. The dedication which women have shown over the years in order to get new groups up and running, how these women fought campaigns for homeless, battered, and ignored women, is a real eye opener.

Dorothy has brought to the fore women who deserve to have their contribution to OWN acknowledged, and she has done this in a way that



*Dorothy Cora, above, author of Vision & Vitality*



should make every member of OWN, new or old, very proud to belong to a sisterhood that welcomes everyone, from anywhere.

I feel quite humble to belong to something that has 'vision' for the future of women and will continue to fight for its beliefs for a few more years yet.

*Josie Jackson*



### *Congratulations*

Congratulations, Dorothy Cora, I savoured every moment of reading *Vision & Vitality* and was sorry to have reached the end. Only now do I realise and understand the efforts that went into establishing OWN and keeping it flourishing. I have enormous respect and admiration for those wonderful women, many of whom are no longer with us, who were able to translate their vision into a truly unique organisation. I feel lucky to have known them and those who are still with us are indeed treasures, and should be honoured. (I thank those who are keeping OWN going at this time, under difficult and challenging circumstances).

I realise that limitations of space meant that many details of all the groups and wellness centres needed to be left out, but I haven't forgotten the interesting discussion groups and meetings that I attended, and how much I learned and am still learning. There were writing groups, art groups, and even a filmmaking group that I would have joined if I had had the time. This is a book that needed to be written, and I'm so glad that Dorothy was there to take a collection of facts and turn them into an interesting, informative and entertaining read. I hope there'll be a follow-up in a few years' time.

Pat Zinn



### Not just a labour of love

It took me over two years to research and write *Vision & Vitality*. Many times I lost heart (it was so complicated!), and many times I lost energy (health problems!). But eventually I got there.

In my short speech at the launch on April 10th I explained that writing *Vision & Vitality* was much more than a labour of love. It was also about ensuring that OWN's valuable work in influencing public policy and enhancing private lives did not vanish (the fate of many other women's organisations), but would be publicly acknowledged and celebrated in print.

It was heart-warming to see so many 'old' faces at the launch, and so many new ones. Margaret Howard, who drove all the way from the mid-North Coast for the launch was warmly welcomed by those with wonderful memories of her as OWN's first Community Worker. Another long-distance attendee, Val Brown, flew from the Gold Coast for the day. Val was a volunteer at OWN in the late 90s, and also provided editorial assistance to me during the writing of *Vision & Vitality*.

Finally, I am very grateful to the many women who thanked me personally and by email for the time and energy I invested in *Vision & Vitality*. Their acknowledgement is deeply appreciated.

Dorothy Cora



### Such celebration!

Congratulations OWN on the publication of *Vision & Vitality*, the telling of a history of which to be very proud. But to Dorothy the accolades! I am in awe of the skill and effort that has gone into the assemblage of material so diverse and so dispersed, yielding what is a very readable and enjoyable book. I'm sure it is already doing the rounds of members and hopefully their friends and relatives, and even joining acquisition lists in libraries.

Barbara Burnham



### Those years at OWN

First and foremost I want to congratulate Dorothy on a fabulous job. She dared to tackle something which the rest of us pussy footed around. And the result is magnificent.

Those years at OWN were tremendous for me, in fact they were a lifesaver in terms of giving me a focus and satisfaction. My attention was mainly on health and out of it grew the Wellness Model which translated into the Bankstown Wellness Centre, and then eventually into many more Wellness Centres around the State. We can all be very proud of that development.

There was also a lot of advocacy and lobbying with various government departments, organising of workshops and conferences, and of course the Unmentionables workshops, dealing with topics such as 'The Blues' and 'Wind and Water', which were not usually talked about then.

One highlight of my activist years with OWN was the qualitative wellness evaluation which a group of us carried out with the help of Northern Sydney Area Health Service, plus two scientists and a Social Ecologist from the University of Western Sydney. The eventual launch of *Picking up Autumn Leaves* by the NSW Governor, Dr Mary Bashir, was memorable.

Renate Watkinson



*The OWN Theatre Group, at the National Folk Festival, received very positive feedback, in the way of applause and commentary, beyond its wildest dreams.*

## *Gear Shift*

**I**n moments of fantasy in my young adult life, I used to think of myself as a sleek and powerful vehicle speeding along in overdrive, on top of the world, eager for whatever adventure might come my way. It all seemed so easy: successful husband, healthy children, a secure home and eventually time to pursue my first university degree. I simply zoomed along life's highway, seeing only an ever brighter future. That had to end and it did...

My splendid vehicle inevitably veered off the road, crashed dramatically and became a twisted wreck, a scarcely recognisable reminder of my former glory days. A mid-life crisis at 40 brought divorce, family devastation, death of my former husband and hospitalisation through serious illness for me. My precious vehicle was off the road for years...

Ten years later, carefully reassembled and strengthened, I set off once more, this time with hard-won common sense to keep me in cruise-control and always mindful of life's speed limits. A restored family with new husband, adult children now forming their own partnerships, newly acquired professional qualifications and a chance at last to fulfil career ambitions kept me on a steady, rewarding journey for another 25 years. That is, until my carefully rehabilitated vehicle began to show the signs of wear and tear after so many years on the road.

At 75, the wheels have begun to wobble, the suspension needs tightening and my vehicle needs more frequent off-road health checks. My fantasy

car spends more time in the carport, simply waiting for the battery to recharge sufficiently for the remaining journey. When I drive, I engage low gear to ensure the coming downhill run is steady and won't get out of control - I do not wish to reach the scrap heap of disintegration and return to the elements unnecessarily quickly.

I want time to explore the hidden backstreets of life's hard-won inner richness and the outer world's incredible grandeur, to spend time with favourite passengers enjoying the ride with me, and to stop by quiet waters, absorbing the grief of losses that have already begun while savouring the challenge of new doors that seem to open with the experience of each loss. This is a time of unanticipated fulfilment, a cause for celebration and gratitude...long may it last!

*Bev Cameron*



## *Triumph at the Trocadero*

**N**ever a group to hide its light under a bushel, or whatever the modern equivalent is, the OWN Theatre Group received very positive feedback, in the way of applause and commentary, beyond its wildest dreams.

On Good Friday morning at 8.30 am we arrived at The Trocadero, one of the main halls at the National Folk Festival, to set up and work with the sound technicians. We did a run-through on the mikes and did whatever it takes to keep our nerves at bay. Not always successfully, I might add. At 10 am we went up onto the stage and the audience was with us from our first number, *When I'm 64*.



### ***The Theatre Group performs***

After the show Ruth, our coordinator, had organised a Q&A, where we told people about the history of the theatre group and OWN NSW and OWN Australia. There were many questions from the audience and good feedback on our performance.

Women from Sydney came up who wanted to join the group, and women from interstate, who were interested in the national organisation. It was lovely to see such great responses from the blokes in the audience as well.

In fact, a couple of husbands came along to help us put up the fliers, do a bit of spruiking and chauffeur duties, when required. The atmosphere at the Folk Festival was lovely – what you'd expect generally from people who sing about the earth and social problems, and love of course. We were never sure how a program about elder abuse would go down but it did attract audiences of around 200 people, and it did make them, sad and glad and thoughtful about the issues. We did a repeat of the performance on Easter Saturday and managed to have a great deal of fun and relaxation between and after performances. Now, when is the next one coming up?

***Rita Tratt***



### ***Why I Fly Qantas***

**M**y husband and I fly Qantas not because of what happens in the air but on the ground. (We have tried Jetstar and Virgin). He needs assistance to get from the entry gate to the loading gate and I need help to lift bags onto and off the luggage check-in belt and carousel.

On our most recent trip I had worked out how to print boarding passes on line but when it came to printing our own baggage labels that was a new challenge. A ground hostess helped with that, a male member of staff appeared from nowhere and lifted our bags onto the belt. We then waited for the motorised buggy to transport us to the boarding gate.

On the return trip as usual (we have never had a delay with Qantas) our flight was on time but the big aircraft had problems so we had to transfer to two smaller planes and departed not one minute late. Unfortunately this resulted in the flight manager on the other aircraft having our request for motorised pick up in Sydney.

We arrived, no vehicle awaited. As the area cleared of passengers along came the pilot and cabin crew. He quickly deduced our problem and he and one of the hostesses magically produced two wheel chairs.

We mentioned that we might miss getting our bags off the carousel. Then began a hilarious race down the almost empty corridor to the amazement of the few bystanders. Our lonely bags were still going round and round but hadn't ended up in unclaimed baggage.

Let's hope Qantas doesn't sack all of its staff who have their hearts in the right place.

***Annette Butterfield***



*At a time when women didn't have the right to vote, women fought for the right to be doctors in Australia. Constance Stone was the first woman to be registered as a doctor, but that wasn't the end of the struggle.*

## *Bit by Bit and Little by Little*

### *By women for women* CONSTANCE STONE

**I**n 1890 Constance Stone, the first female doctor in Australia, led the struggle against the male establishment for the right of women to become doctors. Nine years later a group of female doctors established the Queen Victoria Hospital in Melbourne, a hospital founded, managed and staffed by women who had not yet achieved the right to vote!

Constance Stone, her sister Clara Stone and cousin Mary Stone all worked for the right of women in Australia to practise medicine.

Women were not allowed to enter university medical school so in 1884 Constance went overseas. She studied medicine at the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania and in 1888 graduated M.D. and Master of Surgery (Ch.M.) from the University of Trinity College, Canada. In London she worked at the New Hospital for Women and qualified as Licentiate of the Society of Apothecaries. Back in



*The Queen Victoria Hospital staff above, and left, Constance Stone*



Australia in 1890 Constance was the first woman to register with the Medical Board of Victoria.

In 1887 the University of Melbourne allowed women to enter its medical school and Constance's sister, Clara, began studying medicine. In 1891 Clara became one of the first women to graduate in medicine from the

university. The two sisters were in practice together, working one day a week at a free dispensary.

Mary Stone, cousin of Constance and Clara, began studying medicine at the University of Melbourne in 1889. In 1893 she graduated, having gained honours, and was placed sixth in the final examination. But the Melbourne Hospital did not admit women to its residencies.

Melbourne's early female doctors couldn't get work in hospitals so in 1896 eleven women doctors, including Constance, Clara and Mary Stone, decided to set up a hospital for the benefit of poor women uncomfortable with male doctors.

The Victoria Hospital began as an outpatient clinic, initially open three days a week in a church hall, with patients dropping a contribution into a saucer.

An appeal was launched and enough money raised to buy an empty building, which became the Queen Victoria Hospital for Women and Children. Opened in 1899, it had eight in-patient beds, an operating theatre and an antenatal clinic.

The Queen Victoria Hospital was one of only three hospitals in the world founded, managed and staffed 'By Women For Women'. Without help or acceptance from the male medical establishment this was a huge achievement then, and would be even today. It is a monument to the determination of Constance Stone and other women to train as doctors and offer medical care to other women.

*Lorraine Inglis*



## *Shameful Treatment of Asylum Seekers*

**O**n the panel of a recent forum held in Manly were Thomas Keneally and Rosie Scott, who co-edited the book *A Country Too Far*, which contains writings on asylum seekers by a diverse group of authors including Anna Funder, Christopher Tsolkas and Geraldine Brooks. The other forum members were Denise Leith, a contributor to the book, guest panellist Ngareta Rossell,

and facilitator Anne Maria Nicholson.

Tom made it clear that the point of our cruel system is to produce hopelessness that is even worse than that which people have escaped from. At the moment, self-harm and attempted suicide are rife. (We have all just heard of a Tamil who tried self-immolation, and is in hospital in a critical condition.)

Quite aside from the lack of compassion shown by our Government, hiding the asylum seekers offshore doesn't make economic sense – keeping 750 people on Manus will cost \$1.9bn over 5 years.

Tom wondered how we were able to take in 170,000 refugees after WWII without the outcry we're hearing now.

Denise Leith has a PhD in International Relations. In the book she has used her talents to tell stories of people she has met. She told us about a man from Zanzibar who was in detention for 4 years and 3 months, but made the effort to grow a garden while there, often from seeds smuggled into the centre by visitors. She wants to be able to say to her grand-children that the inhumane treatment of asylum seekers is not done in her name. They are not 'the other', she says.

Ngareta Rossell is known in this particular community as the Queen of Asylum Seekers; she is a regular visitor to Villawood, and makes herself available to brief doctors, journalists, lawyers and psychiatrists, about the plight of these people.

She maintains that the Arts

have a strong role to play in pricking the consciences of Australians by telling the asylum seekers' stories, underlining the importance of the book we were celebrating. Ngareta quoted an Iraqi doctor as realising "the wire was there not to keep 'them' in, but to keep 'us' out".

Rosie Scott referred to asylum seekers as the most marginalised people on earth, saying the writers in the book have addressed the

issue with "truthfulness and grace".

This was another sold-out forum, of which there have been about 20 across the country. The size of the audience denotes the deep well of compassion and determination to show Australians' more generous and sympathetic side, that is out there. We need to become informed, write letters, see our local MP, and visit detainees if possible.

*Anna Logan*



*Thomas Keneally, above, and Rosie Scott, below*



# Notices



## Australia Post concession information

On 1 April 2014 the cost of basic postage rose from 60 to 70 cents. However, there are concessions available to the following concession card holders:

- Pensioner Concession Card
- Health Care Card
- Commonwealth Seniors Health Card
- Department of Veterans' Affairs Card
- Veterans' Repatriation Health Card

To obtain a concession, eligible customers will first need to complete a MyPost Card application form and return it to a post office. At the same time you will also be required to show your valid government concession card for confirmation of your eligibility. You should receive a bonus free booklet of five stamps along with your MyPost card in the mail within 14 days. In order to purchase concession stamps you will need to show your MyPost card.



Please note that there is a limit of 50 stamps at the concession price per year, per eligible customer. Click on the following link to access a copy of the MyPost Concession account form which you can print out: <http://auspost.com.au/media/documents/MyPost-Concession-Account-application-form.pdf>



## Wellness activities

OWN offers a number of very affordable Wellness activities at various locations during school terms. Ring the appropriate 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**

## Sydney OWN AGM and Workshop

July 10, 2014

Mott Hall, Millers Point

10am-2pm

### 10.30am Workshop *How Feisty are we?*

Part 1: Small group  
discussion:

Issues of discrimination for  
older women

Part 2: Plenary discussion:  
What are we going to do  
about it?

Part 3: Summary and  
conclusions

### 12pm - Formal AGM for OWN Sydney

Please book by July 3

Email: [sydneyown@gmail.com](mailto:sydneyown@gmail.com)

Phone: 9987 4017

**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.



## MEMBERS & FRIENDS WELCOME TO ATTEND ACTIVITIES

### Lost Ladies

10am every Wed (during  
school terms), exploring  
various locations or  
topics of interest. Contact  
Annette Butterfield email:  
[abutterfield\\_852@hotmail.com](mailto:abutterfield_852@hotmail.com)  
or 9665 5369.

### Film Discussion Group

You are invited on **Tues  
June 13**. 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, JUN 16 - 12.30pm  
at 87 Lower Fort St. **Burial  
Rites** by Hannah Kent.  
MON, JULY 21 - 12.30pm  
at 87 Lower Fort St.  
**The Pure Gold Baby** by  
Margaret Drabble.  
Come at 12 with a  
sandwich for lunch.

### Aboriginal Support Circle

The next meeting will  
be on June 2 at 10.30 at  
the Aboriginal Catholic  
Church, La Perouse.  
Valerie Bryant from  
the Aboriginal Catholic  
Mission will be speaking.  
Please bring lunch to  
share. Confirm details  
with Pat Zinn 9389 1090  
or email [pattzinn1@  
hotmail.com](mailto:pattzinn1@hotmail.com)

### Saturday Social Group at Birkenhead Point

Drummoyne Sailing Club.  
The club opens at 10.30am  
but coffee is not available  
until 11am. Contact Bev  
Cameron on 9957 5367.

## SUBSCRIBE NOW to OWN MATTERS

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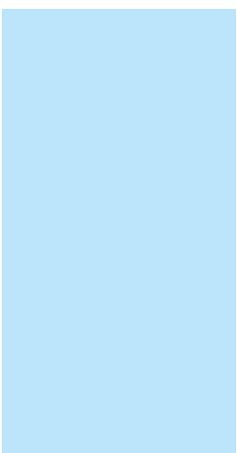
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