



OWN MATTERS

Global Refugee Situation. It Could Be You - It Was Me! Tit For Tat.

Dealing with homelessness. The Next Chapter. Swear Not.

Have older women become trapped in individualist culture?

The Flyer. Dress For Success. So, What About Refugees?



New clothes set right image

Dressed for Success offers women the chance to find the perfect outfit for job interviews without the cost



Flying back in time

The Flyer brings back many happy memories of childhood trips to see Grandmother in Newcastle



Swimming with whales

A breathtaking experience as a mother and baby whale get up close and personal with swimmers in the open sea



Refugee crisis won't go away

Global crisis brings new challenges as refugees face hostility from countries that don't want them



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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.

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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The global refugee situation

The current global refugee situation is one of the most challenging the world has ever faced. The latest statistics from the United Nations show the number of people displaced as refugees has reached its highest level in over a decade, in large part due to the civil war in Syria. With more than 2.3 million Syrian refugees registered (half are children under 18) and tens of thousands more awaiting registration, Syria is set to overtake Afghanistan as the world's largest source country for refugees.

Elsewhere in the world, new crises continue to emerge. Over the past year, violence and insecurity in the Central African Republic has displaced more than one million. Recent fighting in South Sudan has forced thousands to flee to Uganda, with up to 2,500 people crossing the border per day. The worst may still be yet to come: many fear that the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan this year will lead to a resurgence of the Taliban and a new wave of displacement. There are similar



fears for Iraq, where rising sectarian tensions and renewed fighting made last year the deadliest since 2008 in terms of civilian casualties.

Many millions of refugees continue to live in situations of long-term displacement, under appalling conditions, with little hope of a solution. Many countries still refuse to provide even a basic level of protection to refugees and some which have traditionally provided a degree of safety and assistance to refugees are now becoming more dangerous or unwelcoming.

The thousands of Iraqi refugees currently residing in Syria, for example, now find themselves caught between returning to persecution in Iraq and

remaining in a war zone. We have also seen security conditions decline significantly in Pakistan, where Afghan Hazara refugees are being targeted in violent attacks; and in Kenya, where attacks by extremist Somali groups have amplified hostility towards the hundreds of thousands of Somali refugees living there.

At the same time, many wealthy countries – among them Canada, Israel, New Zealand and several European nations – have been increasing their restrictions on the entry of citizens of refugee-producing countries.

Sadly, Australia is probably now the highest profile example of a wealthy country turning its back on people seeking refuge, with the reintroduction of policies to prevent asylum seekers from remaining in Australian territory.

Lucy Morgan (Refugee Council)

NB: In future issues of *OWN Matter* we hope to read more articles about how we can address the complex challenges of global displacement in a more humane and constructive way.



Letters

Congratulations Adam Goodes, Australian of Year

Adam Goodes has worked tirelessly fighting racism, both on and off the field during his AFL career, as a proud Aboriginal man and we congratulate him on achieving the title of Australian of the Year. Not only is he a wonderful ambassador for his people, he has said that he wants to use the title to raise awareness of Indigenous constitutional recognition. He also established a mentoring Foundation in 2009 with his good friend and former Sydney Swans teammate, Michael O'Loughlin.

Pat Zinn



Real People

What happened to the author of Tit for Tat was my reason for leaving the Commonwealth Bank about 25 years ago and I've been with the Credit Union ever since. I never have to wait when I telephone, they have never bounced a cheque and all the girls call me by name because they recognize my voice. I pay all my bills by B-pay with them never leaving my

armchair. I toyed with the idea of internet banking until my son had his whole account stolen, also I definitely prefer real people.

Annette Butterfield



Shingles

As one of the majority of older Australians who had chicken pox years ago, I live in dread of shingles. In American magazines the vaccine is advertised as widely available, something all clued-up seniors should have. It is not widely available here.

My GP says one patient of his, a retired female medical practitioner, insisted on being vaccinated, and somehow obtained the vaccine.

Meanwhile, I see friend after friend felled by the worst pain they have ever suffered, with weeks or months of debilitating after effects. In the worst cases, sight, mobility and even cognitive skills can be impaired.

This costs the health system money. It costs individuals,

families and communities a lot of suffering. This vaccine is being considered for the PBS in March.

Penelope Nelson

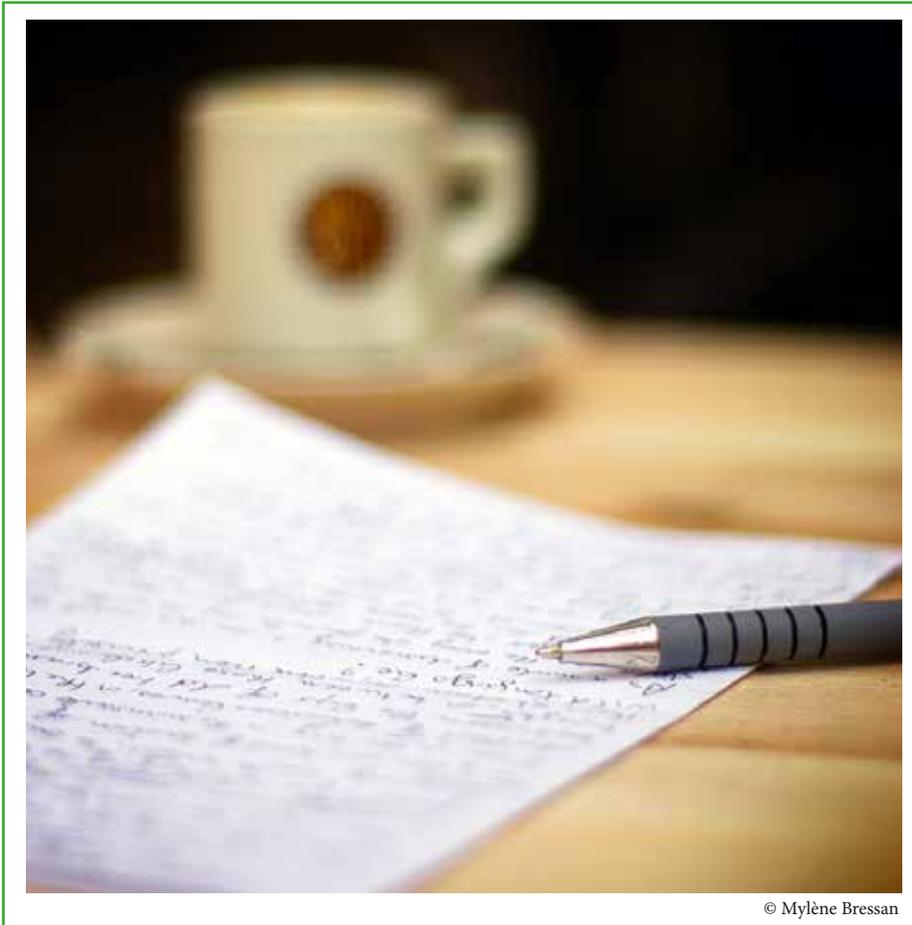


OWN Needs Volunteers!

If you've been toying with the idea of volunteering, why not consider volunteering at OWN? There are dozens of jobs that could challenge, inspire and keep you active!

This newsletter – *OWN Matters* is produced by a team of volunteers, and requires an enormous amount of creative and production work, as well as administrative tasks, to get it to your door. As you read, have you ever thought of writing? Maybe you have thought - you know what this publication really needs is a column on... Well, don't hold back, we'd love to hear from you.

When you submit material please email it to newsletter@ownnsw.org.au, keep articles to word .doc format, or just leave them in the body of the email, so that the editors don't have to retype material. This slows down communication, and production,



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and may prevent us being able to get your contribution to press.

Or you may be one of those gorgeous creatures who can't help but read with a red pen in your hand, correcting our typos, formatting, punctuation, spelling and grammar. Hide your light no more - we need you on our editorial team!

It takes a team to read content at least three times before it goes to print, and still errors get through.

We are convinced there are editors/proof readers in waiting out there. Contact Lorraine Inglis on 9569 0051 or email: louinglis@gmail.com

If that sounds like too much pressure, maybe you'd enjoy our lick and stick crew – they do the newsletter mail out once a month. They work damn hard. These women are flat out – breathless – but it's not from the folding and sticking – it's from the talking and laughing, while

they fold and stuff! For this position you will need to be able to fold, count, sort and talk at the same time. And thanks to OH and S the only licking these days is their fingers after morning tea. They are a great team! Contact Noel Carpenter: 9971 0021.

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Our OWN Gardeners

Help! There are green things out the back of the OWN office, and they are growing. We have even had sightings of wildlife!

OWN is urgently seeking enthusiastic volunteer gardeners, naturalists, wildlife documentary makers – anybody that will take an interest in this area and give it the love and attention it deserves. We have various tools to assist you in your cultivation/taming, and other equipment that may aid in your enjoyment of this recreational space.

Please contact Beth Eldridge at the OWN NSW office to sign on as a community garden member. OWN Sydney Membership is required. Contact: 9247 7046 or email: info@ownnsw.org.au

Beth Eldridge

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At and Beyond the Rocks

A Rickshaw ride to the Opera House

It was a sweltering 29 degrees in October and I dreaded the hot walk from the Quay to the Opera House. Outside Custom House I spied a green rickshaw which I hailed. The “wallah” introduced himself as Nilo saying it is “Svedish but I am German”. So we cycled along Pitt St, as I regally waved to the lunch-time crowds and on to Macquarie street. The air-conditioning was perfect as we descended to the SOH. Nilo said at the gate he was not allowed any further, so I presented my ticket. We cycled straight round to the entrance all for \$10.

Ceri Ritchie

Gong for Barbara!

I was fortunate to be at the Wollongong Citizen of the Year award and was thrilled to witness Barbara Malcolm’s name announced amongst the Senior Citizens of the Year.

She founded the Illawarra Older



Blacktown and District OWN

Blacktown & District Older Women’s Network African Drumming group were invited to take part in the Mt Druitt Multicultural Festival and the Sydney Festival in Western Sydney.

On 6th December, 2013, our African Drumming group took part in the Multicultural Festival

which was held at The Hub, Mt Druitt.

Then during the Funpark Sydney Festival 2014, which was held at the Bidwill Hotel, Bidwill, our African Drumming group took part in the event for three consecutive nights from 17th January to 19th January.

Polly Lee, Secretary



Women’s Network Wellness Centre in Coniston with the aim of assisting members to live independently and delay the transition into aged-care facilities by improving fitness and maintaining community connections.

The number of eager participants has steadily increased - as has their level of fitness - so further classes have now been added to the program including Thai Yoga and Ukulele.

Ceri Ritchie



Our Tongan Adventure

Our first day out on the water was amazing and it wasn't long until we had our first encounter which was breathtaking. We were excited and scared and not sure what to expect. We soon came to realize how amazing these gentle giants are.

We had two of these encounters on our first day and then... our third encounter. We had a mother and baby and an "Escort", (otherwise known as the boy friend). Mother and baby seemed relaxed with our presence and were happy to have us watch them for some time. She would push her baby towards us as if she was showing off her prized new possession and wanted all the world to see. A very proud mum indeed! Looking down to the bottom of the ocean we saw the escort swim underneath us. What an awesome sight. We had no idea what was going to happen next.

Then.... out of nowhere, this huge grey mass was heading towards us. Humping out of the water the size of a double decker bus. Our guide called us all to stay together. Here we are treading water in the middle of the ocean with this huge whale which was swimming fast, and not knowing where it was heading. Our guide assured us this was normal...It happened all too fast to be really scared.



We were listening to Jodie, our guide, who said it was only the escort showing us a sign that we were getting too close to the mother and calf. Again this happened, so we all huddled together until the escort passed us and went back to watching mum and bub. Jodie said that we should head back to the boat to give the whales a break.

While all this was happening mother and calf were also having a very good conversation to each other. The sounds that they were making were amazing. To be under the water and to hear their song is something we will never forget. When we were close to the

whales the song would actually vibrate through your chest. Just breathtaking. I think this was to be the most amazing swimming encounter with the whales we would have over our 10 days in Tonga.

Our adventure was soon over and the flight over the islands back to the mainland was amazing. Every island was filled to the brim with coconut palms and surrounded by coral reefs. It was just breathtaking. Arriving back in reality we cannot wait until our next whale encounter, maybe sometime in the future.

Sue Humphreys and Jo Brindley
Illawarra OWN Wellness





Aboriginal Support Circle

Issues

Aboriginal Freedom Fighters Remembered

In January 2014, about 200 people gathered in Melbourne to commemorate the 172nd anniversary of the execution of Tasmanian Aboriginal freedom fighters Tunnerminnerwait and Maulboyheener, convicted of the murder of two whalers in south-eastern Victoria and tried alongside three women, Truganini, Planobeena and Pyterruner, charged as accessories. It is believed that the whalers were killed as revenge for abducting and murdering Aboriginal people in Tasmania.

They had been brought to Melbourne from Tasmania by the 'Protector' of Aborigines, George Augustus Robinson, to act as intermediaries with Victorian Aborigines. After the execution of the two men, the women were returned to Tasmania.

In 1841 the group had set upon an eight-week campaign



of resistance to European settlement. They had no resources and were not even citizens, but they stole firearms and set stations and farmhouses alight and brought the British Government to its knees during that period.

The Melbourne City Council has approved a report recommending a 'significant public monument' on the site where the two men were executed and buried, which is now part of where the Melbourne market stands. Finally they will be recognised as freedom fighters, fighting for their country. Activist Gary Foley has stated that the erection of the monument is "important psychologically, as a nation, and for us as Aboriginal people, that Australian society recognises the wrongs of the past."

Over the 2014 Australia Day weekend, Aboriginal people in Canberra rallied in front of the Australian War Memorial to draw attention to the thousands of Aboriginal people who had died at the hands of the colonisers during the 'Frontier Wars'.

There were many heroes during those times, such as Pemulway, the first Australian resistance hero, but also Wiradjuri man Windradyne, Nyungar man Yagan, in Western Australia, Jandamarra, a young Banuba man of the Kimberley, and the Kalkadoons of north-west Queensland, who practised a guerrilla war but were finally defeated at Battle Mountain, near Cloncurry. It is time that all these resistance heroes are recognised, and its high time



to mount a campaign to see a memorial to Pemulway erected here in Sydney. (I wrote to Clover Moore several years ago suggesting this, but had no reply).



Closing the Gap

The 6th Closing the Gap report on progress on closing the gap in Indigenous disadvantage was delivered by Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, at the opening of Parliament on the 13th February.

In the past 12 months, there has been progress in halving the gap in death rates for children under five by 2018 and halving the gap in year 12 completion by 2020. However, halving the gap in employment outcomes by 2018, closing the gap in life expectancy by 2031 and halving the gap in literacy and numeracy achievement by 2018 show little progress.

The PM said improvements must be made in school attendance to achieve literacy and numeracy, the target being 90% attendance. He committed himself to ending “the tyranny of low expectations” in Aboriginal affairs. Opposition leader, Bill Shorten, vowed bipartisan support.

A concern is that the potential

for progress on Indigenous inclusion could be slowed by elements within and around the Abbott government re-fighting the culture wars over the ABC, threatening to make changes to the school curriculum and anti-discrimination laws, and threatening not to accept most of the recommendations of the Gonski report on school funding.

Bill Shorten has implored the Government to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait people are empowered to be part of the process rather than just targets of “policies that fit the rhetoric of the moment”. What is crucial is the necessity of the political will to work towards closing the gap.



Musings of an Ex-South African

As an ex-South African, I, too, would like to add my voice to all those paying tribute to Nelson Mandela, who set a moral example for the rest of the world.

He did not forget injustices, but was able to put them behind him, valuing every human being and treating everyone with dignity and compassion and, in the process, healing relationships and wounds with the power of love.

Before 1948, there was apartheid in South Africa too, in white attitudes. Blacks could not vote, they could not buy land outside reserves, they were unable to join most trade unions, and they were banned from selling their labour on the open market, earning more than the designated wage.

South Africa was also part of the British Commonwealth, with the same British attitudes to ‘colonials’ and ‘Blacks’ as here in Australia. In fact, when I moved here 23 years ago, and started to learn about Australia’s treatment of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, I was shocked to realise there was apartheid here, only it was a very closely guarded secret.

Maybe I’m super-sensitive, but I’m beginning to recognise apartheid attitudes in our new Government’s actions, especially in its proposed examination of the school curriculum and particularly in its secrecy regarding asylum seekers. One of the ways in which the National Government controlled apartheid was through censorship. Nevertheless, those of us who really wanted to find out what was going on had ways and means of doing so.

Be vigilant, be concerned, the next few years are going to be tough!

All stories by Pat Zinn
●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●

There are thousands of stories among the homeless in Sydney, particularly the homeless women. This is just one of them.

It could be you - IT WAS ME!

It isn't really rocket science – in order to secure one's future it's crucial to have some form of passive income whilst you toil away at your day job – usually a home. Basically, if you don't have that, you're going to be in trouble down the track. They say there are only two certainties in life - death and taxes. Well, I would suggest another two –rents will go up and salaries down. That spells Crisis.

Unfortunately, I never earned enough to secure a mortgage. No matter how hard I worked, whilst I continued to rent, my salary only ever seemed to just cover the bills and a pretty simple lifestyle. Savings were minimal and were quickly eaten up - Illness, cars breaking down, and redundancy twice in 25 years.

The race to the bottom started when a small business I'd operated for a number of years, took a tumble. At the same time, I got notice on my commercial premises as well as my rented flat. My savings were dwindling. I enrolled in a TAFE course to retrain into something sustainable for an older woman but had no money to get another rental. I moved in with relatives and registered at Centrelink.

The dole covered storage, internet and phone, food and some petrol. I'd gone from being a small business owner with no debt and savings to being homeless and penniless.

Eventually it was time to move on and pursue my life as a couch surfer elsewhere. One of the most

Strategies for dealing with homelessness

- Accept life is SLOW now. You can't do a lot with no money, no home. But you will be busy just finding a roof and maintaining yourself.
- Accept that your friends and family who have never been in this position do not know what you are going through. Better not to whinge around them. You'll regret it.
- Cut out all extra costs – things like private health, subscriptions – get your expenses to the bare bones.
- Keep mobile communication going –It's an expense but I believe necessary if at all possible.
- Go to the Centrelink early – before you've spent your savings.
- You will be required to register with an Employment Services Agency if you are still eligible for work. They are not all equal. The not-for-profit are to be recommended over the for profit .
- Before you leave home, and if you have a car, make sure the files you'll need are all in order and are easily obtainable. Better still, scan and store everything digitally. Your car could become a sort

surprising and destabilising effects of becoming homeless is the fact that family and friends really don't understand. It is totally off their screen and the number of couches available can be very thin on the ground.

In my case the only other available couch was at a relative's some 60km out of Melbourne (I was living in Sydney). Eventually I had to leave as relations



DRESS FOR SUCCESS®
SYDNEY

of home away from home. Pack sensibly, whether in car or storage, and make sure all your clothes are accessible – you may need next season’s clothes too.

- In dealing with Centrelink, find out for yourself how it all works. Be firm when you need to be but stay calm with them.
- Contact Salvation Army or St Vinnie’s for help with food vouchers, petrol (sometimes) and bills.
- Your employment services agency will provide referral to Dress for Success in Marrickville – free clothes for interviews (pictured above).
- Centrelink can refer you to someone for free tax help if it’s that time of year.
- If you’re on the verge of homelessness Centrelink will offer their counselor. The counselor can only

really give a list of women’s refuge centres. I believe there is a long queue anyway.

- If you have the chance to choose your food, eat well. A \$12 bowl of beef noodle broth from a Vietnamese restaurant is enough for two meals and nourishing.
- Find a bulk bill doctor.
- Mind your back health – travelling and sleeping on spare beds/couches is tough on an older back – check out exercises online.
- Keep your hair long enough to tie up. Hairdressers are out so keeping short hair tidy can be costly.
- Recalling what you can be grateful for at night actually does work to settle your emotions: I have a bed, someone who cares, car if you have one, anything, even if it’s I’m still breathing.

Fiona Connolly



were straining despite having become an expert at walking on eggshells. I came back to Sydney and couch surfed with family and friends, always trying to find creative ways to pay my way.

Things I did as payment in kind for a roof over my head: dug ditches, built garden beds, collected chook and cow poo, painted, cleaned, scrubbed, babysat children, cats, cleared garages, prepared

a house for sale on a weekly basis. I’ve packed my car thousands of times, and learnt to live on the smell of an oily rag. Hairdressers and manicures were a fantasy. Just ensuring I had clean clothes was a major assignment. Living became a day-to-day thing where personal maintenance took up an enormous amount of time.

Fiona Connolly



For better or worse, what has gone is still with us. We still remember how it was. But as everything changes so we have to change and move on.

The Flyer

‘**W**hat an adventure, taking ‘The Flyer’ to Newcastle back in the late 1940’s! You travelled on that steam train even before it was air-conditioned? It hasn’t been in service for a l-o-n-g time! Diesel replaced it ages ago!’ My railway buff and historian acquaintance was clearly surprised.



Somewhat miffed and now feeling like Methuselah, I pressed on, relishing my memories. Just after WWII, as my grandmother lived in Newcastle, Mother frequently took my sister and me to visit her, travelling on ‘The Flyer.’

My sister and I anticipated these trips eagerly as a change from our otherwise prosaic lives. We loved the rush and bustle of Central Station and waited impatiently for our train to be ready. We then hurried into our carriage looking for our booked compartment, threw our luggage onto the delicately wrought iron racks. Seizing the window seats, we put our sandwiches out, determined to make them last as long as possible to add interest to the two hour journey.

Try as I might, I could never make my sandwiches last longer than Hornsby station. But from then on, I was entranced with the bushland scenery, thrilled as the train rattled over the old Hawkesbury River bridge, curious when we ploughed over the causeway, intrigued by the rows of oyster racks spread out in shallow inlet waters, and agog with interest when the train slowed down to pass railway

men working on the line and calling out ‘Paper?’ followed by many rolled up newspapers flying from carriage windows into their waiting hands.

Each time the train approached a tunnel and exited, the mournful wail of the steam whistle filled the air, hinting at fearful mysteries, but the comforting CH-ch-ch-ch as the train pulled along spoke reassuringly to us. Clouds of smoke billowing out of the engine funnel held my gaze when I leant my head out of the window. But inevitably, Mother would tell me to get my head back inside and almost as inevitably, I would get soot in my eyes.

Growing impatient as the train entered the final stage of the trip, I would search the surroundings for the familiar blue and white signs saying ‘Only [so many] miles from ‘Griffiths Bros Teas,’ a Sydney-based company. In that way, I calculated how much longer we had to go. At long last, ‘The Flyer’ would pull into Newcastle station, letting out a blast of steam like a sigh. ‘The Flyer’ like any hard worker at the end of the day, was ready to rest.

Bev Cameron



Have we older women become trapped in an individualist culture?

Gradually as long term members of OWN die or become too frail to participate fully, we are being replaced by women of the 'baby-boomer' generation. That's a good thing. But times have changed, the values of the baby boomers are somewhat different and the culture at OWN is also changing. We need to think about the implications.

The baby boomers, have mostly avoided wars and major depressions during their lifetime, at least in Australia. That is not to say that there haven't been hardships...there have...but they are of a more personal nature. And many of OWN achievements in the past have helped to change the prevailing public attitude to older women, and to get better services available for us than ever before. Also baby boomers are more confident, more willing to demand access to leisure and health services. In terms of leisure, we are now 'spoiled for choice'. And we are healthier for longer. That's a good thing too.

But does that mean that we don't need OWN anymore? Is our individual pursuit of health and pleasure enough? OWN has always stood for mutual friendship and support among older women but also a fierce determination to advocate for human rights and dignity and an appreciation of the richness of life for older women. Have those needs changed? In detail maybe, but not in principle. We still need each other. We still need to advocate for better conditions for older women. We can only do these things by working together.

Jenny Onyx



Dress For Success

Imagine if you were an older woman, unemployed for some time, possibly even homeless. You have a job interview, you have the qualifications needed, but not the clothes.

Dress for Success is an organization which helps older women dress for an interview. They need donations of suitable clothing, only this type of clothing. The Showroom is open Monday-Friday, 9.30-4.30 and Saturday 10am -12pm to receive donations. It's a good idea to call first on 1800 773 456 or email: info@dfssydney.org

DONATIONS ACCEPTED: Clothing: Business suits, Jackets, Pants, Skirts, Dresses, Blouses, Tops. **Shoes:** Good quality work shoes: Court Shoes, Flats, Pumps and Boots. **Accessories:** Good quality handbags, belts, scarves. **Undergarments:** unopened hosiery, Bras, Leggings. **Cosmetics and skincare:**Unopened/ new.

The quality, "fashionableness" and range of well-known brands in our showroom makes our clients look good and feel good. A few minutes checking over items you are about to donate helps minimize the number of volunteers needed to sort clothes. It helps if clothes are freshly laundered and ironed, and no more than five years old.

Ask yourself; Would I wear it to work? Would I feel good if I wore it? Is it still fashionable?



*If we object, are we objectionable?
Who decides if we are objectionable?
Who decides the language we use is offensive?*

So, what about the refugees?

A late night program on ABC Radio National included a number of representatives from the Australian Army, both current and past serving members, and a few health professionals. The topic was Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD.

I've heard a few programs lately which have included returned soldiers from, e.g. Afghanistan, voicing concern over the lack of services available to those suffering PTSD on coming home to Australia. One commentator even suggested that the funds allocated for the 100th anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli (2015) would be better spent providing interventions for improving the mental health of those returning from war.

"Even Navy personnel are affected", it was claimed and not usually recognised because of their distance from armed combat. But involvement in the rescue of 'Boat People' has been a contributing factor. And no doubt for the refugees themselves, many of whom had been exposed to hugely traumatic experiences before stepping into leaking boats.

My research on what represents a traumatic event suggests that it includes:

- Threat of death
- Serious injury
- Death or serious injury of a close friend, colleague or family member



- Viewing or handling of bodies
- Witnessing human misery or degradation on a large scale
- An action or inaction resulting in the serious injury or death of others.

Such experiences must have been daily events in the lives of many refugees including children, and continue to be so while awaiting acceptance and settlement in Australia.

As my late night program continued I realised that the probability that many refugees suffer PTSD was not going to be included or even acknowledged.

I was saddened by this. I hope this is not indicative of lack of adequate care of refugees with PTSD for whom trauma of one kind or another, for some, must continue to be a daily occurrence, but I fear it is.

In this still very lucky country...we can do better than this!

Sonia Laverty



Swear not, not by heaven or earth...

Police will soon be able to issue fines of up to \$500 to anyone who displays offensive language. (The fine for speeding at more than 20km over the limit in a school zone is \$531 and running a red light \$353).



Who decides which words are offensive? Scott Weber from NSW Police admitted that deciding whether someone's language was offensive 'relied on subjective judgement,' but that the Police Force welcomed the change.

"They just don't like people disrespecting their authority, they don't like being sworn at – not because they're offended by their words, it's language widely used among police officers themselves, widely used by the community," said Jane Sauders from Shop Front Legal Youth Centre.

Offensiveness changes over time. That strong F-word, which is of Germanic origin related to Dutch, German, and Swedish words for 'to strike' and 'to move back and forth', appears in John Florio's dictionary in 1598. But while the f-word was common in that period, it was not a swearword. It was an impolite word for sexual intercourse. It was rare in print in the 18th century because it came to be thought of as vulgar. It was banned from the *Oxford English Dictionary*. In 1960 a court case was won permitting the word to be printed legally.

Curiously most 'swear words' relate to normal functions like sex and excretion. Do we now have to say, "Urinate off!" to someone annoying us? At a book launch recently, a socially progressive young man was wearing a T-shirt with the words, "Copulate Tony Abbott". I want a protest sign saying, "Defecate on swearing fines."

Offensive language warning!

Do not allow your mother to be shocked by the next paragraphs. In fact, close your eyes...

The British Film Board has a scale of offensiveness.

Very mild: Bird, bloody, crap, damn, god, hell, hussy, idiot, pig, pillock, sod, son-of-a-bitch, tart.

Mild: Arse, balls, bitch, bugger, christ, cow, dickhead, git, jesus, jew, moron, pissed off, screw, shit, slag, slut, sod, tit, tits, tosser.

Moderate: Arsehole, bastard, bollocks, gay, nigger, piss, paki, poofter, prick, shag, spastic, twat, wanker, whore.

Strong: Fuck.

Very strong: Cunt, motherfucker.

'Offensive' words on Facebook in Australia, from one to twenty in frequency:

Fuck (1), shit, bitch, bloody, cunt, damn, crap, dick, piss, cock, bugger, fag, slut, bastard, pussy, asshole, darn, douche, arsehole, bollocks (20).

Very few are very mild!

What happened to freedom of expression? Who is more likely to be hit with the fine? Minority groups such as Aboriginal and young people? If the law is 'on the book', who knows when and how it will be enforced?

Lorraine Inglis



If it wasn't so serious, it would be funny. In fact, it's so funny we have to laugh at it!

From the bone boiler/ tripe dresser - The next chapter

No signs yet in any part of my land of any bone-boiling or tripe dressing business that Leichhardt speculated might be possible.

Having cut one metre off the side of my house it was time to tackle the shed. It was much better built than my house, with proper footings in all the corners and everything. Not like my house, built in some places on the ground, some places on concrete, some places on low footings and in one corner on a pile of rocks. The shed had to go.

My architect said, "The council doesn't want you to demolish your small freestanding (poorly built) cottage." I said, "It doesn't say anything about me not demolishing my small freestanding (well built) shed."

I notified all the property owners around before fibro removalists



came with their suits, gloves, their masks, and their bags. Me, the property owner, kept out of their way. They took away all the fibro, for a goodly amount, in a couple of hours.

Next, David and I had to deal with the frame. What keeps houses where they are is gravity. No one had told my shed builder that. He obviously believed that buildings needed lots of framework and did every piece twice using heavy old hardwood. Every joint had a large number of 12cm nails. It was impossible to knock that shed apart. David took to it with a chain saw for

a couple of days. The amount of timber used to build that "shed" was incredible. David has enough firewood for the next two winters and enough timber to build his chook house. Now the shed is gone and I've stacked my yard with piles of wood/ timber/ doors etc for David to take home. But which business, in the shed at some time, had the kind of telephone line needed for a multiple of telephones?

My architect came back to re-measure my house. He said nothing when I told him the length of tiled concrete sticking out used to be part of my floor.

Tit for Tat

Dear Sir, I am writing to thank you for bouncing my check with which I endeavored to pay my plumber last month.

By my calculations, three nanoseconds must have elapsed between his presenting the check and the arrival in my account of the funds needed to honor it.

I refer, of course, to the automatic monthly deposit of my entire pension, an arrangement which, I admit, has been in place for only eight years. You are to be commended for seizing that brief window of opportunity, and also for debiting my account \$30 by way of penalty for the inconvenience caused to your bank.

My thankfulness springs from the manner in which this incident has caused me to rethink my errant financial ways. From now on, I, like you, choose only to deal with a flesh-and-blood person. My mortgage and loan repayments will therefore and hereafter no longer be automatic, but will arrive at your bank, by cheque, addressed personally and confidentially to an employee at your bank whom you nominate.

Be aware that it is an OFFENSE under the Postal Act for any other person to open such an envelope. Please find attached an Application Contact, regrettably 8-pages long, which I require your chosen employee

to complete. Please note that the mandatory details of his/her financial situation (income, debts, assets and liabilities) must be accompanied by documented proof. In due course, at MY convenience, I will issue your employee with a 28 digit PIN number which he/she must quote in dealings with me.

I regret it cannot be shorter but I have modeled it on the number of button presses required to access my account balance on your phone bank service.

When you call me, press buttons as follows:

- #1 - Make an appointment
- #2 - Query a missing payment
- #3 - Transfer the call to my living room in case I am there
- #4 - Transfer the call to my bedroom in case I am sleeping
- #5 - Transfer the call to my toilet in case I am attending to nature
- #6 - Transfer the call to my mobile phone if I am not at home
- #7 - Leave a message on my computer, a password to access my computer is required. Password will be communicated to you at a later date to the Authorized Contact.
- #8 - Return to main menu and listen to options 1 through 7.

Regrettably, but again following your example, I must also levy an establishment fee to cover the setting up of this new arrangement.

Your Humble Client
(author unknown, supposedly 80 + woman). Article forwarded to OWN Matters by Annette Butterfield



He measured the width of land and house, finding the walls of my house did indeed now fit inside half the land. But we will have to remove the eaves. They were part of the metre we cut off, and they now stick out too far. I almost whimpered when he said that. Next time Dave will cut off the eaves and take home my 'Timberyard'.

A new survey will be needed, but I've told the architect to apply to Leichhardt Council to simply subdivide the land. It's something he's never done before.

Lorraine Inglis



Notices

Seniors Days

Sydney Royal Easter Show
April 15-16, 2014

A new, bigger and better program of events for people aged 50 years and over will be available at the Sydney Royal Easter Show in 2014! If you come to the new seniors hub at the Show, located near the Big Top Amphitheatre, you will be able to find out about special offerings around the Show including Tech Savvy Seniors. You can book into special events and enter competitions provided by a variety of new sponsors. Watch the Easter Show website for more details:
www.eastershow.com.au



Young at Heart Seniors Film Festival

Young at Heart is back for its ninth year in 2014, running from 15 to 23 March. The festival presents daytime screenings in Sydney (Dendy Opera Quays), Parramatta (Riverside Theatre), Newcastle (Tower Cinemas) and Canberra (Capitol 6 Cinemas, Manuka). Selected titles also screen in over 30 regional towns across NSW and beyond.

Premieres this year include New York comedy *Fading Gigolo*



SMSA Mystery and Crime Reading Group 2014

April 5 - Crime against a backdrop of motors, engines or machiner.

May 3 - The underbelly of gardening, horticulture, forestry or farming.

May 31 - Crime amid a natural disaster

June 28 - Crime fiction from the decade or year you were born (timed to commemorate the C&M Reading Group's 9th birthday)

July 26 - Isolation - crime in a remote place eg Antarctic base, the outback.

August 23 - Comic or humorous crime fiction.

September 20 - Architecture or buildings - a crime novels with a sense of place, eg Barry Maitland's novels.

October 18 - Crime writer with an interesting bio - eg: Dashiell Hammett, Anne Perry, William Broderick.

November 15 - Psychopathology/medicine/dentistry - lots of possibilities.

December 6 - Christmas Meeting, your favourite new or rediscovered writer for 2014.



starring Woody Allen and Sharon Stone, Japanese family drama *Like Father Like Son*, Kashmir-set Indian drama *Valley of Saints* and a new star-studded adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* written by Oscar-winner Julian Fellowes (*Downton Abbey*).

New documentaries include *The Battle of the Sexes*, about the 1973

Billie Jean King /Bobby Riggs tennis match that galvanized women's liberation and made history, and *Before You Know It*, a candid and revealing portrait of gay seniors. Classics include a special screening of Philip Noyce's Sydney noir *Heatwave* and new digital prints of *North By Northwest*, and *The Wizard of Oz* (in 3D).

Filmmakers will be on hand to take part in Q&As with the audience, including the teams behind home-grown films

***Vision and Vitality:
Celebrating 25 years of
the Older Women's
Network in NSW***

by **Dorothy Cora**

**to be launched on
April 10, 2014**

**Mott Hall, Millers Point
10.30am for 11am start
Lunch will be provided**

**Please RSVP by April 1 to
Sharan Tuite 02 9824 6124**

OWN NSW invites all members to join us in celebrating the OWN story and especially those who have lived the OWN history. Entertainment will be provided and there will be plenty of time for catch-up with friends. Be sure to come and help make this a great event.

If you need transport to get there we might be able to help, so contact Sharan. If you are available to assist with transport contact Sharan on: sharon.tuite@bigpond (note spelling of Sharon)

Backyard Ashes, Eric Smith: Not Finished Yet, and The Man From Coxs River.

The best new Australian short films featuring seniors in lead roles will screen at the 'Stay in Touch' Short Film Awards, presented by National Relay Service. The audience will vote alongside a jury of industry professionals. Tickets on sale from each venue February 14.



**MEMBERS & FRIENDS
WELCOME TO ATTEND
ALL OUR ACTIVITIES**

Wellness on Wednesdays
9.30am-12.30pm every Wed.
Abraham Mott Hall, Argyle
Street, Millers Point.
Contact Lola 9665 8741 or
Joy 9698 5205

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 **Tues
March 11**. 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, MAR 17 - 12.30pm
at 87 Lower Fort St. **We Need
to Talk About Kevin** by Lionel
Shriver.
MON, APR 21 - 12.30pm at
87 Lower Fort St. **The Merry-
Go-ROund in the Sea** by
Randolph Stow.
Come at 12 with sandwich
for lunch.

Aboriginal Support Circle
Confirm details for next
meeting with Pat Zinn 9389
1090 or email pattzinn1@
hotmail.com

**Saturday Social Group
at Birkenhead Point**
Drummoyne Sailing Club,
next door to Birkenhead
Complex. Opens 10.30am,
coffee available 11. Contact
Bev Cameron on 9957 5367.

**SUBSCRIBE NOW
to OWN MATTERS**

Subscription to **OWN MATTERS**
is just \$30 per year, due every July 1.

- Want to Join OWN Sydney at the same time? Tick this box and include another \$10 member's fee.
- Like to donate to OWN NSW?

\$.....

PAYMENT METHOD

- I enclose a chq/money order for \$30 (covers to June 30, 2013) plus \$10 for membership made payable to: OWN NSW **OR**
- Please debit my credit card for \$30 or \$40

Total Amount:

Card Type: _____

No: ____ / ____ / ____ / ____

Expiry Date: __/____

Name on card (Pls Print):

Signature: _____

Address: _____

State _____ Postcode _____

- I need the large print version (A3)
- I'd love it on email too
- Email Only - DON'T post email address:

LOOKING FOR A GIFT IDEA?

Please send the above subscription to:
Name: _____

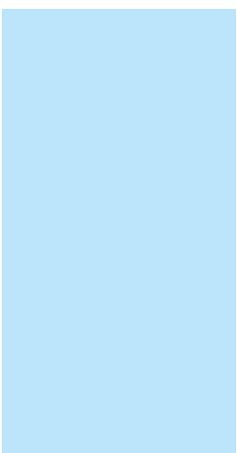
Signature: _____

Address: _____

State and Postcode: _____

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

OWN Matters



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