



OWN MATTERS

Fifth Birthday Party. Laughter Is Really The Best Medicine.

OWN NSW Quarterly Meeting. Dorothy Hoddinott.

Unsung Women Peace Activitists. A Contemporary Family.

Blacktown Historical Society Tour. Demolition Day. Ellen Mulcahy.



Education for refugee kids

School principal Dorothy
Hoddinott fights for refugee
children to access education
in Australia.



Call for help at OWN NSW

Members are asked to
bring their wealth of
knowledge and skill to our
management team.



Theatre show must go on

OWN Theatre Group
performance brings a smile
to the audience despite a few
setbacks.



Top to tail a suffragette

Lorraine Inglis finds a fresh
take on the old look of a
suffragette for this year's
Ernies.



Older Women's Network NSW
87 Lower Fort Street Millers Point, NSW 2000
Phone: 02 9247 7046 Fax: 02 9247 4202
email: info@ownnsw.org.au
web: www.ownnsw.org.au

ABN: 36 992 030 904



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Who Are We?

The Older Women's Network (OWN) NSW is the peak body for 18 groups and 6 Wellness Centres in NSW. OWN promotes the rights, dignity and wellbeing of older women through a range of activities and resources, and advocates on issues of interest and concern to older women.

OWN Matters is the newsletter of the Older Women's Network NSW. It is published 11 times a year. The annual subscription for individuals is \$35 and \$44 for organisations and includes GST.

Have your say

Members of OWN groups in NSW are encouraged to contribute to OWN Matters with items of interest to older women and Letters to the Editor.

Send by email or mail marked Attention – Editorial Team.

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

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

The Team

Editorial Team

Lorraine Inglis, June West, and Anna Logan.

Editor: Lorraine Inglis

Guest Editor: Dorothy Cora

Admin Support

Margaret Holland, Margaret Kearney and Beth Eldridge.

Layout and Design

Michelle Davies

Mishy Dee Creative Designs

Membership & Subscriptions

Chris Taylor

Mailout Team

Pat Rayne, Noel Carpenter, Veronica Willis, Corinne Campbell, Wendy Brown, Colleen Wellsmore.

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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HELP - OWN NSW NEEDS YOU NOW!

OWN has played a valuable role in influencing government policy for the past 25 years, and our objectives and guiding principles remain very relevant.

But OWN, like other Not for Profit organisations, operates in an environment where governments are reducing, or axing, funding, and definitely increasing, or changing, requirements that we must conform to in order to qualify for government funding.

The OWN NSW Management Team is thus in the process of taking stock of what is needed to survive and be effective as a progressive, challenging and relevant organisation, with sound management that constantly seeks to support and work with OWN groups. That process has been started including identifying the areas of work the Management Team is responsible for. We hope members will rise to the challenge and nominate to be a member of a subcommittee or the Management Team when vacancies come up.

We are aiming to provide a firm base for future work and



the survival of OWN. The sub committees identified so far are:

- Events: Planning conferences, quarterly meetings, parties etc, new location.
- Communication: Responsible for brochures, website, OWN stories etc, media.
- Risk and compliance: policies and procedures, insurance, partnerships with other groups.
- Financial: financial reports, banking, audit, payroll.
- HR: Staff records, recruitment, job descriptions, staff support.
- Secretariat: Minutes, agendas, letters, phone calls.
- Policy and research: Wellness, Elections 2015, attendance at conferences and report.
- Office for Ageing: Work Plan obligations and responsibilities,

contact with Ministers of Government, other relevant organisations.

Probably none of us know everything about all of these areas, but together we do know a lot and, let's face it, we are creative! Sharing the work means that we all do a bit and it can be fun, not a burden. And the future of OWN depends on it! Opportunities for training and/or support will be available.

Why not have a go and call Jan Malley, OWN office, Monday or Tuesdays, or email her on admin@ownnsw.org.au and let her know you're interested?

Sonia Laverty
Chair, OWN NSW



Letters

Big Problem!

Some of the troubles in my truly horrible week were related to technology. Difficulties were caused by not charging my phone and the internet not working. OK, an address book doesn't need charging. Big problem!

The publishers of address books have not kept up with technology. Their layout allows about two lines per person when some people needed 4/5 lines. They don't allow for some people producing more children and some letters needing more pages. Big problem!

Google! Someone had worked out the percentages for initial letters of surnames. W is as common, as I is not. But Google organises contacts by first names. Big problem! I went with Google.

I set up pages to reflect numbers in a small book and started to record details. I had no idea why some names were there so I left them out. And details change more often now. Big problem! I bought a small pencil with rubber on the end.

This will all depend on me keeping my book and pencil with

me, and always writing in new names. Big problem!

Lorraine Inglis



Heroic

This is in praise of my mother and all mothers. When I try to think of the logistics of how many hours, how much muscle went into bringing up six children I know that she had stamina and was practical down to her marrow.

I spoke to her in the hospital where she waits until a nursing home can be found by a broker. 'I just want to go home,' she said, but this was not to be because she has had two or more falls in the hostel where she has lived for the past four years. Nearly all her long term memory has gone.

It was a valuable part of our conversations which she enjoyed greatly. Laughter is balm to our chats and she enjoys a joke. I wonder how many other women were as lucky as my mum, to have lived long and with the care of her children. We take it in turns to fly, drive and visit her in Adelaide to let her know we love her deeply. She is now in her ninety-fourth year.

Many of my friends don't have family and I am all too aware of this. So who and how will I live into the future. Can I plan carefully enough to structure what is left of my life? This is not meant to be a morbid letter, but one of measured practical sense. I think women have lots of skills with which to navigate life's challenges.

At this moment I am looking forward to finding a small house in the Newcastle area, and tomorrow visiting with an agent a property that would suit my needs. Wish me luck, girls!!

Glenys Buselli



I really look forward to receiving our newsletter each month. It keeps me up to date with what is happening and that pleases me. After reading every article I feel that I am more aware of things that are considered good or bad, just take your pick. But, dare I say it, the newsletter is a bit boring.

What happened to the letters that were non-political but personal happenings to our members? What happened to the tales of places visited which enthralled readers?

It's wonderful to learn about what is happening in the political arena but we have to have humour to temper the serious. Life should have humour, lots of it. To raise one's spirit for the challenge of everyday living – that takes humour!

Josie Jackson

PS: To quote our late guitarist Bernice, "Living alone and I like it".

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Women of the night

This year the dressing theme for the Ernies is Suffragettes. What did they wear? In some old photos they looked very grim. I said to myself, "Self, you are not going to a party dressed like you are going to a funeral".

I looked online. Evening gear in Edwardian times depended on where you belonged in society. The upper class wore long, quite slinky dresses sometimes with trains, and maybe furs. The working class women wore a variety of skirt styles but most wore shirtwaisters (those blouses with very full upper sleeves). I owned neither a full skirt that came to my ankles nor a shirtwaister. So I went to Vinnies, my choice in an emergency.

I found this black skirt, with daring red lace showing below the frill. I found a red dress with almost the right kind of sleeve to wear under the skirt. (It's a dress I could wear later.) I bought a black hat, but no silk stockings. This especially designed outfit looks nothing like the clothes



Lorraine in her Suffragette costume for the Ernies

suffragettes wore at street protests. But I'm sure suffragettes had a social life. They would have dressed up for the theatre or for dancing, maybe not in black and red. "Ladies of the night" deserved the vote too.

Were milliners paid for each item they put on those extravagant hats? Bows and ribbons, flowers, feathers and plumes (probably from endangered birds). My first

effort at millinery, Lincraft for black tulle and a rose, Photios for two long black plumes. (The only endangered thing about these plumes is the bits that might fall off). The hat looks the part. This older woman wearing a red blouse, a long black skirt with a red frill and a highly decorated hat, will be travelling by public to the Ernies.

Lorraine Inglis

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At and Beyond the Rocks

Deepwater OWN

Deepwater OWN has had a very up and down year again. We meet in the Spike Milligan Room at Woy Woy Library on the 4th Friday of each month, and have coffee mornings or outings on the 2nd Friday of each month.

This is very popular with our Members. Our coffee mornings are really great and they turn into discussions. Really good ideas come up to organise outings such as ferry rides, theatre groups, trips to Sydney and Newcastle for lunch and Art Galleries, also meeting up with another OWN group for one of their meetings.

Last year we did up toiletry bundles for Elderly Homeless Women for the Coast Shelter, Central Coast, and we will do that again this year.

Deepwater OWN has nine members. We put up flyers in venues such as Libraries, community centres this year. Here in Woy Woy there are many clubs/meetings that are established in the area and this makes the process of growing very difficult. We find it hard

getting speakers because we are such a small group. I still try ringing around to contact people that would like to discuss anything of interest. Hopefully this year we will have other women come to join Deepwater OWN.



Northside OWN

We meet every Wednesday during school term at the Dougherty Centre in Chatswood where we have a wonderful relationship with Willoughby Council and the management of the centre. We are a small group of nineteen members but continue to encourage new members.

Our Wednesday activities include Feldenkrais, Qi Gong, information and discussion sessions, and a book club which meets once a month.

The book club is very popular and we get a number of visitors who enjoy the discussions. Some members have commented they would never had read some of the books had they had to choose for themselves.

Our speakers for the information sessions are varied and interesting. We have had speakers from COTA, NSW Health, Chatswood Historical Society, Australian Cancer Research, Mobile Eye Clinic, Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, Cervical Cancer Foundation, Electronic 'E' Health System and Community Care.

A highlight this year has been a talk about travelling on container ships by a wonderful 96 year old woman. She and her friend first travelled on them when they were in their 70's. They are no longer allowed to travel on them because insurance won't cover them and so they are very disappointed. She has joined our book club and is an inspiration to us all.

Annette Bray



Nowra OWN

Our group membership hovers around fifteen members. We lost a couple of our members recently through relocation, ill health and transport difficulties getting to

meetings. We have had a varied program.

Our 'This is my life' were interesting. We've had a number of book reviews by members.

Our guest speakers were: The history of Shoalhaven, Travel talks, Holiday tales, Retirement living, Our city's waste program, Exercise physiologist with exercises to keep us alert mentally and physically, The new me- Make up demonstration, Council's work on our city.

We've had visits to St George's Basin for lunch, and Cancer morning tea.

Olwyn Cambourne



OWN Wyong

Our small but active group of fifteen members is one of three on the Central Coast, an area of beaches, lakes and mountains. We are fortunate to hold out meetings in 'Rose Cottage' which is part of the Northern Women's Health Centre and centrally located.

Karen Mackenzie of the Katakudu ('Safe Place') Women's Housing was our speaker at our April meeting. This organisation provides transitional housing for women and children for up to 12 months after leaving an emergency refuge. They are able to establish a tenancy record, have the stability to look for work, and

form connections within the community.

A definite highlight was our day out to Old Government House Parramatta for the *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* exhibition. Car pools were arranged and picnics packed.

The exhibits were well displayed with information about general fashion and social history of the era. There was much discussion about the glamour of the costumes.

Our most recent excursion was a tour of the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Base in Newcastle, with Brisbane Waters OWN. We were treated to a delicious morning tea and talks by one of the many volunteers.

The pilot took us onto the helipad to explain the "nuts and bolts" of the rescue equipment, personnel and rostering. This was followed by a barbecue. We left the base feeling very grateful to have such a wonderful service available.

Pauline King



Southern Highlands OWN (SHOWN)

This year was SHOWN's 12th Anniversary. We have eighty-six financial members and attendance at monthly meetings is generally over fifty.

Based in Wingecarribee Shire, we

have members from Mittagong, Bowral, Moss Vale, and all Shire villages. One member comes from Blackbutt in the Illawarra and four from Tallong in Goulburn Mulwaree Shire.

We have had excellent guest speakers. Topics were Parkinson's Disease, Internet Safety, Osteoporosis, Meals On Wheels, Keeping Fit and Active, Powers of Attorney and Wills, Avoiding Scams, and Medicare Locals / eHealth.

Our activities included a monthly Games and Activities Afternoon; monthly Book Club; several theatre parties to Sydney and locally; an arty day trip to Goulburn and Canberra for the Archibald Prize and Turner From the Tate Exhibitions; a trip to Manly; overnight for Vivid Sydney and the International Wildlife Photographer of the Year; and occasional lunch outings.

We are grateful for the range of assistance we have received at SHOWN:

- Mittagong RSL has provided rooms for meetings and activities.
- The Community Radio, local commercial and ABC stations and local papers gave us free publicity.
- The Council has listed us in the Seniors Directory and on their website.
- Geyi Chen has taught our Tai Chi group at a reduced rate.
- Several local businesses have donated raffle prizes.

Robyn Smith





Aboriginal Support Circle Issues

Abbott Government Pushes Back Indigenous Recognition Referendum

Nigel Scullion, Minister for Indigenous Affairs, has said that the promised referendum on recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Australian Constitution is unlikely to be considered in this parliamentary term. He mentioned 2017 if the Coalition government wins a second term.

He said that there “needs to be a set of changes that Australia accepts” meaning that the proposals need to be modest, rather than something that advanced a “rights” agenda, and that there is already legislation preventing discrimination on the grounds of race. Labor supports constitutional change which explicitly addresses discrimination, because racism must be confronted.

Sadly, it seems that the momentum for constitutional changes is being lost. There seems to be strong internal resistance in the present

government to the idea of reform going beyond a symbolic gesture to Australia’s First Peoples.

Pat Zinn



Drumbeat

Drumbeat (Discovering Relationships Using Music - Beliefs, Emotions, Attitudes and Thoughts) is a program designed in WA to help Aboriginal people deal with mental health issues.

It involves group sessions with a facilitator encouraging participants to work together and develop skills central to healthy relationships. The hand drumming allows participants to feel safe in a way not generally available in traditional programs dominated by direct questioning.

The concept was developed in 2003 and has expanded to all Australian states in settings including schools, mental health clinics, youth services, drug rehabilitation centres and aged-care facilities, and is now attracting attention in the USA. The results from a trial in 7

Western Australian prisons - a world first - prove it is quite revolutionary in the mental health area. There were improvements not only in mental health wellbeing and resilience but also reduced psychological distress among many of the prisoners who took part. It was also found that the prisoners enjoyed the interactive nature of the program, and developed teamwork, communication and relationship skills in the process.

The researchers now have a sense of urgency in taking the program to wherever there are people in need of mental health benefits.



Fitzroy Crossing Women Tackle Alcohol Scourge

Banuba woman June Oscar, chief executive of the Marninwarntikura Women’s Resort Centre at Fitzroy Crossing, a remote town in the Kimberley region of Western Australia, has been the motivating force in banishing the unlimited supply of liquor that has been causing not



only violence and suicides, but also Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders. There are approximately 1,500 people living in the town (80% Indigenous) and another 2,500 in small settlements and camps comprising 5 language groups, who have been there for generations.

The grandmothers started noticing that many of their grandchildren were having poor growth, motor-coordination problems, inability to retain memory, as well as social and behavioural problems. They took the initiative and asked leading paediatricians and researchers

from the George Institute and Sydney University to look at the problems affecting the children and suggest strategies to prevent it happening and support the parents and children.

Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) were soon diagnosed. 1 in 4 children have some form of permanent damage caused by mothers drinking during pregnancy. The study involves more than 120 eight-year-old children in the first study of FASD in Australia (possibly the world).

Mothers were grief-stricken when they realised that their FASD-

damaged children had a much higher chance of ending up in jail, or dead by suicide. Because local women are involved in the research (they receive training), the participation rate is 95%.

Since the study began, there has been a ban on the take-away of full-strength alcohol (against the opposition of liquor stores, small businesses and even some councillors). The local family and children's centre runs multidisciplinary child health clinics and low-key education sessions for pregnant women and families. It also provides early intervention for the children affected by FASD. Now fewer women are drinking during pregnancy, the consumption of alcohol and incidences of domestic violence have fallen. School attendance has increased and there has been a reduction in hospital admissions. Unfortunately the Federal Government does not yet recognise that FASD is a disability.

June Oscar identifies alcohol as a national issue. We hope that other Aboriginal communities will fight back, take responsibility and drive a solution for excess alcohol consumption as the Fitzroy Crossing women have done. All honour to them.

Pat Zinn



*When you're feeling in the dumps,
don't be silly chumps,
Just purse your lips and whistle,
that's the thing!*

Fifth Birthday Party

On the 8th of September Illawarra Wellness celebrated five years here in Coniston. Emma Hanna, a local broadcaster and entertainer, acted as our MC at our launch and was happy to be asked to again host this event.

The Phoenix Theatre was almost full, with over eighty women present. Celebrations commenced with a welcome to country and a presentation by our OWN Connie Girls Ukulele group who got us all tapping our feet.

Our speakers were great. Jenny Thompson, the Community, Cultural and Library Manager of the Wollongong Shire Council, congratulated our success and wished us well into the future. In a later email she commented: "I had an absolutely fabulous time at the celebration. Congratulations to you and the organising team for making it so fun and engaging – you must have been exhausted by the end of the afternoon. It was a huge undertaking!"

Our very popular local Labour MP, Sharon Bird, told of her experiences on turning fifty and becoming invisible. There were many nodding heads, eye rolls and laughter as Sharon spoke of how she is now perceived as an older woman. Our final speaker on the day was Georgina McInnes who spoke on the importance of 'Objects of Passion'. Georgina was looking for stories for her Uni studies of what treasured possessions mean to older persons.

Our morning finished with a lively presentation by the OWN Theatre Group of hits from some of their

**OWN NSW
Quarterly Meeting**

*All members are invited to the next
Quarterly Meeting - hosted by
Southern Highlands OWN (SHOWN)*

Thursday, Oct 16
Moss Vale Community Centre,
Queen St, Moss Vale

10.15 for 10.45 start
Morning Tea & Lunch provided

***An interesting and entertaining
program is promised!***

Transport & Accommodation
Train timetable, driving directions and
accommodation details on insert page

REGISTRATION: Please register to
attend this meeting. Ring Robyn Smith
on 4872 3955 by Oct 9 to book

past shows, including *Cabaret*, *Don't Knock your Granny* and *Ma, It's Time to Move*.

Celebrations moved next door to our Community Hall for lunch, a welcome cuppa and the party. The volunteers had been working all morning preparing a delicious lunch. Then it was time to move the tables back and dance, drum and socialize with friends. We are looking forward to a future of presenting wellness and wellbeing as a way of life for older women.

Barbara Malcolm



Laughter is really the best medicine

In a week where terrorist threats were foremost in the media The OWN Theatre Group performed at the Community Centre in Lakemba on 18 September, and embraced the diversity of this suburb and its people.

Originally, we were scheduled to perform at the Hannaford Centre at Rozelle, but due to a horrific explosion across the road from the venue we were relocated to Lakemba, just across the road from the railway station, which became the site of a large protest.

So, before an audience of community workers, mental health professionals and residents we performed *Cabaret*. We'd been asked to put on a show that was light, bright and positive about ageing. Our best advertisement is to demonstrate our own feelings and thoughts about living life the best and most enjoyable way we can, not forgetting the trials that constantly beset us.

Life as a hospital patient, on the waiting list of a phone queue trying to get put through to the appropriate person and sorting out medications were topics, which struck a real chord with the audience. It was obvious that people had experienced their own frustrations and real belly laughs emerged as the truth of the situations emerged.

Life can be very funny, if only we can filter out some of the depressing news that fills us 24/7. We need to react to situations that we regard as unjust



Having fun: Rita enjoys a blonde moment!

and unfair but it's also so good to get together for a giggle or two and even better when we can inspire it in others.

And let's not forget all those endorphins that are produced, with proven medicinal benefits.

To quote *Always Look on the Bright Side of Life*:

*“When life seems jolly rotten
there's something you've forgotten
and that's to laugh and dance and
smile and sing.
When you're feeling in the dumps,
don't be silly chumps,
Just purse your lips and whistle
that's the thing...”*

Happy October everyone!

Rita Tratt

OWN Theatre Group



Dorothy Hoddinott is a passionate advocate for the needs of refugee and asylum-seeker children

Dorothy Hoddinott

I recently attended the Jessie Street National Women's Library Annual Fundraising Dinner at Parliament House, featuring the incomparable Dorothy Hoddinott AO, principal of Holroyd High School.

This is a truly multicultural school; more than that, it's a 2-in-1 school. Not only is it an Intensive English Centre, it's also a Comprehensive High School for years 7-12. Together, Holroyd holds some 570 students.

Dorothy has been, for nearly 20 years, a passionate advocate for the needs of refugee and asylum-seeker children. Currently half her students have been in Australia for fewer than 3 years, two-thirds of them are refugees, more than 80 per cent speak little or no English. Holroyd has 80 students who are recent asylum-seekers, 20 of whom are on Temporary Protection Visas.

Dorothy's heartbreak is that now most of these students – principally from Afghanistan and Iraq – will not be allowed to stay in Australia. So no matter how they progress with their educational aspirations, they will not be able to realise them here. She emphasised, "they have no hope".

Dorothy's most recent fight has seen her making a formal complaint to the Human



Dorothy Hoddinott, centre left, with Holroyd High School students

Rights Commission over the NSW Education Department's refusal to allow the enrolment in school of asylum-seeker children over the age of 18. She has won that fight but, unfortunately, the over-18s will be financially unsupported.

To help Holroyd's female students get a University education, a fund has been set up under the National Foundation for Australian Women (with tax deductibility) called the Holroyd High Fund for Refugee Girls. Up till now this has paid for a number of girls to go to University. Another 'unfortunately' tells us that now the Federal Government insists this type of student (on particular visas) must pay fees as though they're international students. Dorothy has no idea how her fund will cope with such demands.

Towards the same goal, the NSW Public Education Foundation has a Friends of Zainab Trust Fund which provides scholarships for 60 to 70 NSW

humanitarian refugees who are entering senior high school or the early years of tertiary studies.

Dorothy radiates a white heat in talking about the cruelty of a system that practises racism and exclusion, even towards children. She says that our treatment of asylum seekers is a great moral challenge and, as teachers, “we have to rise to these challenges”. Some of Holroyd’s students have never been to school anywhere, so are disadvantaged from Day 1 – but succeed many do!

She sheets home the success of Holroyd’s students to the prevailing ethic there of effective teaching and a shared set of values. Incredibly, 40 per cent of their students go to University each year compared to a national average of 30 per cent!

Anna Logan



Unsung women peace activists

Lately I have been disturbed by the rapid increase of Australia’s involvement in Ukraine and Iraq and the promotion of the centenary of WW1.

Recently, I was heartened to attend the Jessie Street National Women’s Library 2014 History Week Symposium, which focused on Australian women’s anti-war and peace activism. We were an audience of feisty (mostly) older women who made lively comments during presentations by Professor Emerita Jill Roe, Professor Mary Spongberg and Dr. Sabina Erica – facilitated by Dr. Beverley Kingston.

Jill led us through women’s peace activism from the Boar War to the present. In her view “men have made a mess of the world because of belligerence and lust”. She described Australian women’s long history of anti-violence.

Jill referenced a recent book written by John Gittings, *The Glorious Art of Peace – From the Iliad to Iraq*. He argues that the peace tradition is stronger than war, which get all the media coverage, but that war is not inevitable.

Mary spoke about Michelle Cavanagh’s biography, *Margaret Holmes: The Life and Times of an Australian Peace Campaigner*, published in 2006. Margaret Holmes, was a beacon for peace and pacifism during her remarkably active life. She campaigned tirelessly within the peace movement, particularly during the 1960s, 70s and 80s.

Dr Sabina Erica talked about the activities of women in the Australian Quakers, including Margaret Watts and Isabel Longworth – both of them energetic and brave in their lifelong work for peace. The Quakers have a proud history of working for peace since the organisation was founded in 1666. Sabina also described the activities of organisations such as the Women’s Peace Army and the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

The following day I visited an exhibition at the Quaker Meeting House in Surry Hills entitled *World War One: Quaker Witness to Peace and Non-Violence*, which included a display of statements, quotes, photos and books.

Joy Ross



Ellen Mulcahy's story showed her compassion for socially disadvantaged people and commitment to justice for workers

Bit by Bit and Little by Little

By Women For Women

ELLEN MULCAHY
1869-1920

Most of our readers have retired and are enjoying life after work, Ellen Mulcahy retired in 1903 but it wasn't to give up working. During her thirty years as a teacher she was known as a woman who stood up for her rights, even if it meant appealing personally to the Minister of Public Education. In retirement she worked hard, standing up for other women's rights.

Between 1909 and 1913, in a period of intense social, industrial and political activism Ellen led the way in the formation of women's unions. Ellen's leadership came from her family and teaching experiences, her determination to achieve justice and her strong personality. Her leadership was not from above, but with the workers for whom she was advocating. She was able to appeal to workers, bureaucrats, politicians and factory managers.

She spent many hours in visiting workers on the job, observing and discussing their conditions and she conducted detailed research into current laws and statistical returns. She arranged venues and speakers for initial meetings to persuade workers about the importance of joining a union.

She wrote articles, led deputations and filled secretarial roles. She helped form a number of women's unions, including for Office Cleaners and Laundry Workers, Women Bookbinders and



Stationery Employees and Cigarette Workers. She advocated for female workers in other areas including boot, clothing, furniture and clerical employment to government officials.

Ellen Mulcahy showed energy and commitment. She emerged as a strong leader and could set the agenda for the period of her activism. Her biggest problem was dealing with opposition from a highly patriarchal Trades Hall. It would not recognise Mulcahy as a delegate for any of 'her' unions because she hadn't worked in those jobs.

She believed in the Labor party and worked hard to support it. She campaigned for Labor in all eight electorates of Melbourne in which Labor stood a candidate in the 1910 Federal elections. She campaigned vigorously in the 1911 Victorian state elections, in which women voted for the first time.

But disillusioned with Labor and the cliques in Trades Hall, she left the Party. She stood as Independent Labor candidate for Melbourne in 1913. Ellen's activism continued all through WW1, supporting soldiers and their families.

On September 16, 1920, Ellen Mulcahy died suddenly of heart failure. The people who might later have recognized her achievements were silent because she was no longer a Labor hero.

Her short remarkable period of public activism showed her compassion for socially disadvantaged people, and her commitment to justice for workers. Her story is that of an early twentieth century woman leader.

Lorraine Inglis



A contemporary family

I have always been interested in IVF reproductive technology but in an objective way. That is, until recent times when my own family became involved.

Years ago, one of my sons had a seven year old daughter from an earlier relationship. In a subsequent relationship, his little daughter and his new partner, though in age separated by 16 years, became fond of each other and close friends. Owing to work commitments, my son and his partner split up but remained friendly. His now ex-partner eventually married, but to her great sadness, found she could not become pregnant. Relying on the bonds of friendship, she asked my now adult granddaughter if she would be prepared to donate some of her ova so she could have a child.

Generously, my granddaughter went through the very demanding hormone process to generate many ova. A large number were harvested and

eleven healthy embryos were generated. After one unsuccessful implantation, the would-be mother became pregnant and for the following nine months, endured a difficult mixture of hope, anxiety that something might go wrong with the pregnancy or the baby she so much desired and total gratitude to my granddaughter with whom she shared a day-by-day report of developments.

Eventually, a baby girl was born. Such was the generous spirit of all concerned, that the mother invited not only my granddaughter to be involved with the child but also my son and even myself, all three of us now genetic if not genealogical relatives. I am really grateful, as the child's genetic great-grandmother, to have developed a warm, personal relationship with the mother in a circumstance where another IVF mother might not have wished to continue such an 'outsider' relationship. She has shown great trust in all of us, freely discussing her concerns about coping with comments from others about how much the child resembles her and whether to explain the story or not, whether to try for another child before she is too much older while still being fully engaged in a demanding career and how she misses her own mother's assistance because the latter lives a long way away.

With such an openness to their reality, I'm sure this thoughtful woman and her husband will negotiate their family's path through life successfully. No doubt, there will be issues the child herself will raise as she grows and complex relationships to be managed in creative ways. But, thanks to modern technology, this fine couple now have at least one child to bring them great joy. And, just privately, I am thrilled to bits.

Bev Cameron



It's time to visit and learn more of the history of our city

Blacktown Historical Society Heritage Tour

As I'm entranced by social history, and since my first two years in Australia were spent living and teaching in Marayong, Blacktown, I jumped at the opportunity to take a six-hour bus tour of Blacktown recently.

We didn't go through Marayong after all, so there was no chance for nostalgia there. However, on the very day of the tour Frickers Shoes in Flushcombe Rd, Blacktown was closing down (due to retirement) after 61 years in the same spot. I'd purchased my son's school shoes there, so that was a jolt to the memory.

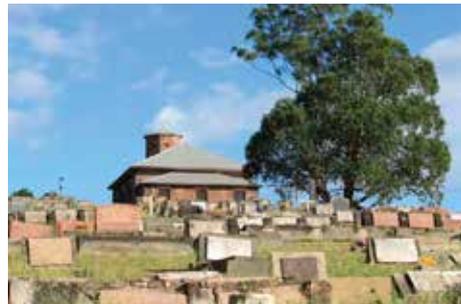
Perhaps one wouldn't think there was much of heritage significance in the western suburbs, but we visited a number of old homes that had belonged to graziers in the 1800's.

On the way to these places we passed Blacktown Public School, built in 1877, but now a beautifully restored building that houses Blacktown's Visitor Information and Heritage Centre in their Civic Plaza. We visited St. Bartholomew's Church, built in 1840 as Prospect's first church (now deconsecrated); it is the earliest known example of Colonial Georgian styled churches in NSW. There is an extensive cemetery there as well.

One of the tourists was electrified to find the gravestone of one of her ancestors! The first burial, in 1841, was of Ann Goodin, aged 15; Maria Lock, the last full-blooded Aboriginal woman of Blacktown was also buried there.



Above: The Alroy Tavern



Left: St Bartholomew's Church

Another fascinating reminder of earlier times that we visited was the beautifully realised square at the heart of the new subdivision of Bunya, formerly the Bungarribee Homestead. The square contains panels constitute a timeline of the area. The land was granted to farmer John Campbell and he built the house, which featured a two-storey, circular conical roofed tower with two single storey verandah wings.

Thus all windows, doors and mantelpieces had to be curved – unimaginably difficult. This estate was used as a Government Stock Reserve and then became the headquarters of the Overseas Telecommunications Commission, which set up a transmitting station there in 1949. The house was deliberately allowed to deteriorate to the point of needing demolition in 1957. And soon the developers moved in!

We stopped at the Blacktown Native Institution

site on Richmond Road, Rooty Hill. Its fascinating history reveals 19th Century attitudes towards removal of Indigenous children from their homes and to this school, where they were cared for by missionaries.

We had lunch at the Alroy Tavern in Plumpton, a wonderful restoration carried out by Blacktown Council about 20 years ago, of an 1880s house almost derelict. Originally this was a fruit-growing area, and supported a cannery. We had a great day – but there’s always more to see!

Anna Logan



Demolition Derby

I always wanted a caravan holiday, and soon I’ll be having one. I’ll be living for a few months in a caravan park. Only the caravan park will be in my backyard.

Many ask, “How’s your house going?” “It’s a knock down, love”, a builder had said when I asked about renovating my decrepit fibro house. I decided I would demolish the house, build two, and sell one to pay for it.

Leichhardt Council wouldn’t allow me to demolish my house, and build two, saying there had been small businesses such “bone-boilers and tripe dressers” in my area. Maybe it could be a theme park tourist attraction? No, council would never give permission in a built up area. Instead I decided to subdivide, sell the house and build on the empty half.

I measured the house. It was over the subdivision line, and I couldn’t subdivide. So we cut a metre off the side of the house. “Lose the eaves”, said the architect so we cut off the eaves. At last the house was narrow enough to apply for subdivision.

An appointment for a new survey was postponed a number of times. Rain set in, water got inside and the lining became very wet. After a call to the



The eaves cut back

surveyor I sent the following email: “Could you please confirm our agreement this morning about my survey being done? It won’t be done today because it is raining. The survey will be done this Thursday afternoon unless it is raining.”

“If it was raining on Thursday afternoon it will be done Friday morning unless it is raining. If it was raining on both days, the survey will be done on Tuesday morning unless it is raining. If it was raining all day Tuesday, it will be done Wednesday morning, unless it is raining. If it was raining all day Wednesday, it will be done Friday morning unless it is raining.”

He came on Thursday, very apologetic, to measure the house. The part we had cut was right, the front eight centimetres wider. According to the original survey, my neighbour’s house was six and a half centimetres over my boundary. Taking that into account, the front of my house is ONE and a HALF centimetres too wide for me to subdivide the land as is.

We’re down to the wire. The only choice left is to demolish my house and just sell half the land. I’m bypassing council and applying to the state planning authority to demolish, through a private certifier. When the house has been demolished I’ll put in the DA to subdivide and build my new house. Meantime the caravan!

My daughter doesn’t approve.

Lorraine Inglis



Notices

Edna Ryan Awards

Book now! The 16th annual Edna Ryan Awards event is being held on Friday, October 17, at the magnificent Trades Hall in Goulburn St., Sydney, from 6-9pm. A high number of nominations for feminist awards guarantees a spectacular evening. Also, the best raffle prizes on offer in Sydney!

Book through the web site:
<http://www.ednaryan.net.au/bookings>



Jessie St Library Lunch Hour Talk

At the Southern Function Room, Town Hall house, 456 Kent St, Sydney from 12-1.30pm.

16 October: Dr Catherine Bishop - *Doing It For Themselves: Women in Business in Colonial Sydney.*

We all know about Mary Reibey – 19th Century female entrepreneur extraordinaire... but was she really so extraordinary? This talk explodes the myth of female domesticity and reveals the women who were the economic face of Sydney in the mid-nineteenth century – from milliners to madams, schoolmarmes to hoteliers – these women included both the

END of ERA, END of YEAR, END of NOVEMBER

Thursday, November 27
Mott Hall
10am-3pm

A party for any member of OWN, any group, past or present. BYO, bring a plate, and your dancing shoes.

respectable and the somewhat disreputable – all plying their trade in the public, commercial streets of Sydney.



Politics in the Pub

Harold Park Hotel, Thursdays
6.30–8.15pm.

October 9
Abbot's cuts to the ABC -
Disempowering democratic debate

October 16: Changes to Domestic Violence Support Services in NSW: Who gives the best support for women fleeing domestic violence and why?

October 23: Teenage mental health is worsening and

continues to be seriously under resourced – What must be done?

October 30: The politics of marriage equality - Why are our politicians appeasing the religious right?



Wellness activities

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

BLACKTOWN:

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

Tuesdays: Hoy & Bingo, Gentle Exercise and Ukulele.

Wednesdays: Drop in for a cuppa and Line Dancing.

Fridays: Drumming & Tai Chi. Monthly bus trips & more! Ring Coral on 9631 3289 or Pam on 9675 7836.

SUTHERLAND:

Pensioners Centre, 749a Old Princes Hwy, Sutherland.

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

Wednesdays: Tai Chi, Gentle Exercise, Drumming & Book Club. Speakers, courses and more!
Ring Noreen on 9545 3489.

ILLAWARRA:

Coniston Community Hall, Bridge Street, Coniston (near train station & parking available).
Mondays: Tai Chi, International Dancing, Drumming & Gentle Exercise.

Tuesdays: Relaxation/Meditation, Thai Yoga & Ukulele.
Ring Barbara on 0406 627 493 or Sheila on 4228 7840.

BANKSTOWN:

Bankstown PCYC, Cnr French Ave & Meredith St.
Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Activities include: Gentle Yoga, Gent Exercise, Drumming, 'Let's Talk About' (Discussion), International Dancing, Guided Relaxation & more! Ring Diane on 9708 2245.

NORTHSIDE:

The Annex, Dougherty Centre, 7 Victor St, Chatswood.
Tuesdays: Mums with Drums.
Wednesdays: Feldenkrais, Discussion, Book Club & Qi Gong. Ring: 9415 2474, 9419 6417 or 0400 630 089.



ACTIVITIES

MEMBERS & FRIENDS WELCOME TO ATTEND

Lost Ladies

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

Film Discussion Group

You are invited on **Tuesday October 14**. 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 9665 2050 to check all details.

Book Club

MON, OCTOBER 20 - **Franklin and Eleanor: An Extraordinary Marriage** by Hazel Rowley. 12.30pm at 87 Lower Fort St. Come at 12 with a sandwich for lunch.

Aboriginal Support Circle

Confirm details with Pat Zinn 9389 1090 or email pattzinn1@hotmail.com

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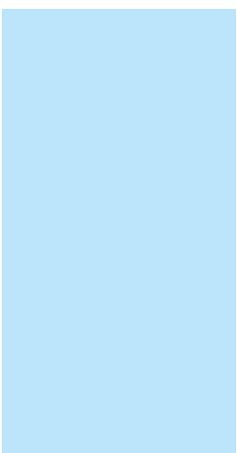
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