



# OWN MATTERS

Newsletter of the Older Women's Network NSW

Vol.8 No.10 – November 2011



## Pat Zinn pays tribute to Betty Little

*Through a chance meeting with her, when the late Ruth Layard and I went to a gathering at the Block in Redfern, Betty joined our group and her meetings were always full to overflowing...*

see *Farewell, Betty, We loved You.* page 8



## A Fantastic National Conference

*The two and a half day Conference was hosted by OWN WA's hardworking team led by its President, Ruth Kershaw and including National OWN Convenor, Sally Jones, National Council Secretary, Eileen Ward, and National Treasurer, our own Cate Turner...*

see *Making a Point* pages 3 and 4



## We can all learn from Vivienne!

*...when Bankstown Group received their laptop, courtesy of FaHCSIA and OWN NSW, I didn't think I would be able to use it and I didn't understand why I **would** need to use it!...*

see *Thanks OWN!* page 15



## One more light is dimmed...

*It appears that under the Future Food Project, the meals are frozen and left on the front door step for collection. Under Health and Safety regulations the volunteers no longer take the food inside...*

see *Wyong Potpourri* page 17

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## Who Are We?

The Older Women's Network (OWN) NSW is the peak body for 19 groups 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 news-letter of the Older Women's Network NSW. It is published 11 times a year. The annual subscription for individuals is \$22 and \$40 for organisations and includes GST.

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. They can be sent by email or mail marked Attention – Editorial Team. Please include contact details. Contributions must be received by the second Tuesday of each month.

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**More help always welcome!**

## OWN Office



The phone hours at our OWN office are from 10:00 to 3:00.

If you call outside these hours you may get a recorded message.

Leave a message, with your contact number, and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Between 10:00 and 3:00 the phone will be answered by one of our friendly volunteers.

## OWN Matters Direct!

We love to hear from you and publish what you have to say in our newsletter.



The best way, for you and us, is for you to email your letter or article.

We have an email address especially for your contributions.

The email address is [newsletter@ownnsw.org.au](mailto:newsletter@ownnsw.org.au)

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# OWN Australia Conference

## Making a Point

There were excellent speakers, and a great facilitator who got all participants mixing quickly and easily, comfortable meeting and eating halls, and good food and wine. All great foundations for an inspiring 19th OWN National conference and AGM in Perth.

The two and a half day Conference was hosted by OWN WA's hardworking team led by its President, Ruth Kershaw and including National OWN Convenor, Sally Jones, National Council Secretary, Eileen Ward, and National Treasurer, our own Cate Turner.

The conference was officially opened by Mrs Tonya McCusker, wife of the newly appointed WA Governor. She shared her vital interest in the work of the McCusker Foundation which funds specialist nurses and research into diseases which confront older people: Alzheimer's, Parkinson's Disease and dementia.

The Keynote Speaker was Dr Ann Zubrick, Vice President of the Council of the Ageing in WA, (COTA). She gave a very lucid explanation of the Productivity Commission Report into the future of Aged Care, including what it covers and why it is of vital importance to all older Australians "This is the one chance we have to really change aged care for the future," Dr Zubrick passionately stated. All OWN members should find out what is included in the report and make their own concerns heard.

Dr Zubrick is positive about some of the proposals and frankly surprised by the open thinking of some

policy draftees, but wary of some of the language used. In the main, the Productivity Commission Report, which is currently under discussion with representative organizations all over Australia, proposes:

- A comprehensive and integrated system of care
- A focus on wellbeing and all that it stands for  
Person-centered care
- Ageing in place i.e. caring for the aged in their home
- Continued funding for services currently funded, while other services could be bought singly by clients

### This translates as:

- Restructuring the whole system – the medical model of aged care has been very damaging and must be weaned out of practice
- A simplified gateway to services
- Reforming the financing of aged care. For example, people should not have to sell their homes to finance their care

Mark Butler, Minister for Aged Care, and a team of consultants including Dr Zubrick have only this year to gather the reactions to the proposals and hopefully begin to make a generational change to aged care.

*continues next page*



# OWN Australia Conference

Please take the opportunity to read the Productivity Commission Report and make your reaction known to the Office of Ageing through OWN NSW Management.

The other Keynote Speaker, Irina Cattalini, the young, enthusiastic CEO of the WA Council of Social Services, introduced us to the concept of CHOGM (Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting) and its importance to civil society. There will be an international "Peoples Forum" held during CHOGM and Ruth Kershaw will be attending and reporting for OWN.

On the afternoon of the first day there were three speakers from the Alliance for the Prevention of Elder Abuse who gave participants an overview of the different organizations involved in empowering older people against elder abuse in WA. The Alliance is an umbrella name for the important functions of alerting, protecting, and assisting older people who may suffer elder abuse. The Alliance also has connections with national and international bodies. Greg Manis, of ADVOCAT, who works to assist in actual or potential cases of abuse, gained close attention as he described some of his personal experiences and how some cases were solved.

Day Two's events were focused on the functions and future of the National OWN Council. They began with a presentation by Cate Turner and Ruth Kershaw explaining the use of the National OWN website, designed by Roxy Rascon twelve months ago and not attracting enough usage by OWN members. The differences between the secure members-only Intranet and the wider Internet website were emphasized. Everyone was asked to really have a go.

The National OWN AGM then followed. The question of annual or bi-annual conferences was raised and the decision was finally made for the 20<sup>th</sup> Conference to be a one day conference to be held in NSW.

Day two ended with the passing of Conference Resolutions.

On the final day, the WA Theatre Group welcomed all participants and members of the public to a lively performance at the Don Russell Theatre in Thornley, their very own space. The Illawarra Drummers followed with great sound and staging in their brilliant costumes. The NSW Theatre Group in white and purple sang their way through several humorous songs interspersed with cheerful skits.

Finally with great presence, the 22 strong choir of the *Spirit of the Streets* accompanied by two guitars came on stage. They lifted the cheering, clapping audience right out of their seats. This choir has members with disabilities and disadvantages, but their huge sound and wonderful voices provided a marvelous close to the 19th OWN Conference.

Thank you to OWN Sydney Committee for my selection as a delegate.

*Joan Modder*



## Somebody Should

It has been asked of the Management Team how to get group members to help co-ordinators so everything is not left to a few. I have been on the committee of a group for a number of years and this has always been a problem until recently when we found, quite by accident, that instead of making general requests, we ask individuals to do certain chores. Instead of standing out in front and reading out things to do, we also send the information round and ask for feedback and if this is not forthcoming, we go out and get it. We have found personal contact works wonders. I think people sometimes forget it is their group and if they want the best out of it, they need to put something in. It doesn't hurt to remind them occasionally that we are volunteers and are members of the group for the same reasons as them. The best example we had recently was with the Bags of Change event. We explained what it was all about and put the bag on a table. The first week one person put in a donation so for the next three weeks I went round to each table to remind everybody what it was all about and by the end of the month we had a very nice donation to bring to the quarterly meeting. So please don't despair. Try getting up close and personal and hopefully, bit by bit, things will improve.

*Your friend on Management*

# Point of View

## What Are They Doing To Our Children?

In 1950 when I was 18, I signed an agreement to work for the Child Welfare Department on the condition that they would pay for the rest of my academic studies. At 22 years of age I was visiting impoverished, disadvantaged and sometimes filthy homes as a representative of the much maligned 'Welfare'.

I had come from a comfortable, loving and strict environment at home, where one of the many axioms by which we lived was 'cleanliness is next to godliness'. What a rude awakening to the real world and the inequalities in our society!

Thankfully, society and the norms of behaviour today are vastly different. The one value that I would like to think is unchanged is the responsibility of adults to ensure the safety and care of children. Surely this is, in the parlance of today, a 'no brainer'. I don't know anyone, irrespective of age, class, religion or political affiliation, who wants to argue differently.

The 'Children Overboard' account in recent years gave rise to an enormous scandal. People were horrified but, like me, the women I spoke to reacted with immediate disbelief. We react to a primitive need to protect our young and we recognise this in others whatever their background.

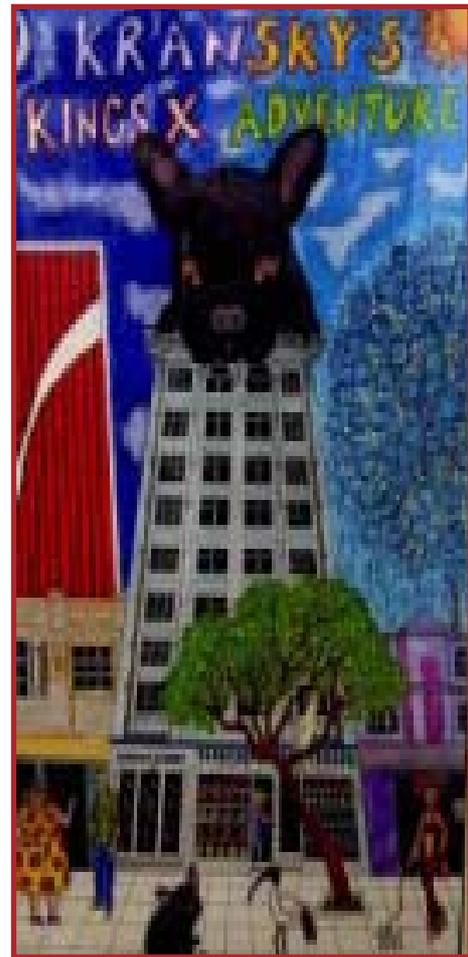
How can we possibly tolerate the behaviour of a government representing us which locks up innocent children, adversely affecting their physical and psychological wellbeing, and now wants to send them to an unknown future? They came here for protection and care. Why aren't we giving it to them?



As part of our group of older women I am hoping that there is a forum where our voices can be heard and our objections made clear. This matter should never have been brought into party politics as it concerns what it is to be human and how we value the human species.

*Daphne Degotardi*

# Point of View



## Companion Animals

I am one of those people older people who benefit from the attention and affection of a companion animal. CJ (Cuddly Joy) is now more aged than me, but in his younger days his help of physical support as I had difficulty getting from low seating was a major aspect of my rehabilitation

Now CJ is my loving companion who still 'runs interference' for me as I move through crowds when shopping in my local area. I was distressed on hearing of the unnecessary suffering death of a companion animal at Sydney Airport on 1 February 2011

see: [www.kranskybulldog.wordpress.com](http://www.kranskybulldog.wordpress.com)

Perhaps you could add your voice in support of Clover Moore's intention to set up a select committee to document the treatment and welfare of companion animals.

Dogs, in particular, seem to only see the good in people and we who love our companion animals have a responsibility to return their love and care.

*Maura Outterside*

# Letters to the Editor



## OWN Activism

Thanks to Beth and the OWN NSW Management Team for a terrific meeting on Friday. The whole idea of *Bags of Change* was brilliant and it was a fun way to raise money for a cause that we, as older women, can relate to and support. Jane Barwell certainly got through to me with her story and it was a joy to see how happy and confident she is now. Zed Tintor's talk showed that positive things are happening in the mental health field now that there is a central organisation that is connected to multiple services.

Regarding Lola's plea for OWN to take up the cause of keeping the Kimberley out of the clutches of the mining industry, it would be a welcome addition to all the protests that are ongoing there. I attended a meeting organised by the Wilderness Society in July, where we were addressed by two activists and traditional owners, Kerriane Cox and Neil McKenzie, who argued that there is a cultural and appropriate alternative, which includes tourism. The Kimberley is a world-class pristine savannah region but it is also a world-class mineral province with coal, gas, bauxite, copper, uranium, nickel and diamonds. There is already mining taking place but the focus at the moment is on James Price Point, a beach south of Broome in Western

Australia. Woodside Petroleum which has earmarked the site for two LNG developments and a port is up against the traditional owners. Premier Barnett announced compulsory acquisition of native title rights in September to get the go-ahead for the project, but legal proceedings challenging the validity of the compulsory acquisition process are under way. If this project is allowed to proceed, the Kimberley will be overrun with mining. Ongoing protests are being carried out at James Price Point by traditional owners and supporters and they need our support.

I attended a rally today organised by Get Up! to challenge the fracking coal seam gas industry in NSW which, if allowed to continue, will wreck our best agricultural land and poison our water. We are all in this together, whether it be in Western Australia, Queensland or NSW and now, with the Wall Street protests in the USA spreading all over the world including Australia, where there were rallies in Sydney and Melbourne, we have to stop Big Business from ruining our planet.

Pat Zinn



## Dear All

So long it's been good to know you. With this I say, "It does matter". Keep up the good work. I am still surviving and it is hard work.

Enid Harrison

## Greetings OWN,

I read Lorraine Inglis' Point of View about 'Terrorist Packaging' with grateful recognition. I have a comment about 'harmacy' packaging.

My mother, in her 80's, is 'pharmed' for the usual conditions, high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, arthritis, and the swathe of problems arising from prescribed drugs.

Recently she collected her prescription and noticed the new packaging of her tablets, which consisted of much heavier foil. The packaging would stop young children from plundering the drugs, but what about older people with delicate skin and diabetes who are ripping their fingertips on the heavier foil? Should they sue for damages (including, maybe, gangrene)? Or is the tough packaging designed to get them to relinquish their independence to tough-fingered 'harmacist's who offer to put your weekly dose into a neat little box?

I suspect that the new packaging is intended to generate more 'harmacy' control of medicines, undermining the independence of consumers who use certain products. I could be wrong. I'll ask next time I drop into the 'harmacy' to look at the pot plants, clock batteries, shelf ornaments, and packets of corn-fructose jellybeans.

Yours in recognition  
Carol Rose

PS We've encountered a problem with those glass fizzy drink bottles with screw caps. They are so firmly attached to the bottle that I have to use a vegetable knife and nut-cracker to remove the cap. An aversive experience that has us drinking less of the product; probably a good thing.

# Shuck that clamshell!

## Anti Packaging Quest

In 2006, *Consumer Reports* magazine recognised the wrap-rage phenomenon when it created the Oyster Awards for the products with the hardest-to-open packaging. There are stand-up comics who do entire routines about trying to get a clamshell package open. In 2006 at an Australian Institute of Packaging conference, Paul Evely from Bassel Polyolefins said marketers and manufacturers had concentrated on getting product on the shelves and had more or less been oblivious to post sales events including injury. Two major downsides of post sale injury are the inability of manufacturers to obtain information about failure to satisfy customers' expectations and the resultant resistance to repurchase.

So what are manufacturers and marketers doing about **terrorist packaging** and its resultant injuries? This issue is of importance to older people, because they have experienced more difficulty opening the packaging, have had more injuries from the effort, and can remember life without it.

The Packaging Council of Australia gave its annual awards this month.

The Sustainable Packaging Award went to Coca-Cola Amatil for its Easy Crush bottle. The Arthritis Consumer Accessibility Award went to Mars Pet care for a Re-sealable Milk for Pets. But there were no big moves towards eliminating PVC or clamshell packaging, or towards making lots of easily opened packaging.

These are two clamshell-packaging openers, but I haven't found them for sale in Sydney, but you can order them over the internet:

[www.amazon.com/s/ref=bl\\_sr\\_hi/181-7196192-3872367?\\_encoding=UTF8&node=228013&field-brandtextbin=Zibra](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=bl_sr_hi/181-7196192-3872367?_encoding=UTF8&node=228013&field-brandtextbin=Zibra), or [www.padsandpanels.com](http://www.padsandpanels.com), but they are probably sold in clamshell packaging.



I wanted to buy a battery charger so I looked in three possible suppliers in George Street. I finally bought one from Georges Cameras, because it was cheaper and it did not have that terrorist packaging. The plastic packaging has those little dimples that you can push together and pull apart so I didn't need to attack it with a pair of shears to open it. But it does not have any recycling number on it so it's probably made of the polluting PVC.

This morning I called into Georges Cameras. They told me that they don't buy products with clamshell packaging now and that any items in their store with it are old stock. They helped me take a photo of the package. Then I called into JB Hi Fi. I took a photo of the battery charger I didn't buy, and told the salesgirl that I don't buy objects in clamshell packaging. She said, "Fair enough"... I asked another worker whether they had customers who complained about clamshell packaging, but she claimed that no one had ever complained.

It's **widgets and gadgets** that mostly come in clamshell packaging, but sometimes even older people buy them. I decided to continue my anti-clamshell packaging campaign. I took a fluorescent globe in clamshell packaging to the counter of a local shop and asked the salesperson to open the packaging. He understood the issue immediately. He pulled out his scissors, cut off the packaging and kept it.

Soon it will be the gift buying season and I plan to see how much plastic packaging I can avoid. How about joining me on an anti packaging campaign?

*Lorraine Inglis*

# Aboriginal Support Circle Issues



## Farewell, Betty, We Loved You

Yorta-Yorta woman Betty Little was one of our Aboriginal Support Circle's most loved and valued members. Through a chance meeting with her, when the late Ruth Layard and I went to a gathering at the Block in Redfern, Betty joined our group and her meetings were always full to overflowing. We learned more from her than any of the lectures and forums we attended because she was a grass-roots battler; a gifted, talented teacher and mentor, a performer and song-writer with a great sense of humour and fun. She won a well-deserved Edna award for "battling against the odds". I got told off by her plenty of times but the most valuable gift she gave me was to listen - to really listen and be there for your friend, not to try and make it better with words.

Her story appears in our book *Steppin' Out and Speakin' Up* (and I urge you to borrow it from our library). She was also active in the Women's Reconciliation Network and ESORA (Eastern Suburbs Organisation for Reconciling Australia), where she 'told it like it is' for many years in their Evening College Aboriginal Studies Course, until she became ill.

The last four years of her life at Blacktown Aged Care must have been so frustrating; understanding what was said but unable to reply, and unable to play her guitar and sing. She was well cared for and much loved by the nurses. She leaves behind her son and daughter and families, and her brother Jimmy.

My belief is that her spirit is free at last, united with her beloved mother, her father, sister and two brothers. Betty, you will always live in our hearts.

*Pat Zinn*

## Columnist Andrew Bolt Guilty of Discrimination

In 2009, columnist and blogger Andrew Bolt of the *Herald Sun* and *Weekly Times* wrote two columns taking a swipe at nine well-known Aboriginal people who could pass as white because of their skin colour but who 'chose' to identify as black for personal or political gain, "to win prizes and places reserved for real black Aborigines". Among the nine are 73-year old Sydney-based activist, Pat Eatock, law professor Larissa Behrendt and author Anita Heiss.

On behalf of the group and herself, Ms Eatock took Mr Bolt and the *Herald Sun* and *Weekly Times* to court on the grounds that the articles and the two related blogs conveyed offensive messages about her and the others. They did not sue for damages but, rather, brought in an action under the Racial Discrimination Act, insisting on a public correction and a promise not to print such insulting articles again. Their legal team worked pro bono and provided evidence that all nine people were raised black, genuinely self-identified as Aboriginal and had fairer, rather than darker, skin colour.

In the Federal Court in Melbourne on the 29th September, Justice Mordecai Bromberg ruled that Andrew Bolt and his employer had breached the Racial Discrimination Act of 1975. He said his decision was not based on the fact that the articles dealt with racial identification per se, but the manner in which they did so. They contained "erroneous facts, distortions of the truth and inflammatory and provocative language.....they were derisive and with a liberal use of sarcasm and mockery". Pat Eatock said, "This is the highlight of my life...a serious moral victory....Bolt set out to offend".

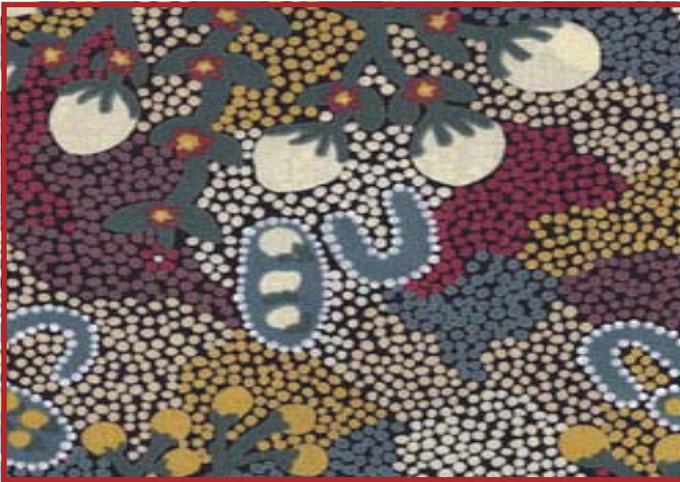
Outside court Mr Bolt said, "This is a terrible day for free speech in this country". (He would say that, wouldn't he?) but the co-chairs of the National Congress of Australia's first peoples, Les Malezer and Jody Broun, explained that, "Freedom of

# Aboriginal Support Circle Issues

speech is not a licence to foster intolerance and racial hatred, but a cornerstone of liberty which must be protected and not abused".

It is not known if Mr Bolt or his employer would appeal the decision. The full judgement can be found in [www.fedcourt.gov.au](http://www.fedcourt.gov.au).

*Pat Zinn*



## Milestone for Oral Collaboration - Rona Tranby Trust

The Rona Tranby Trust is an oral history collaboration established after a bequest to the Tranby Aboriginal College in Glebe from the will of Holocaust survivor, Thomas Rona, who died in a car accident with his wife, Eva, in 1987. The NSW Jewish Board of Deputies (JBD) worked with the college to establish the trust to record and preserve oral history from Aboriginal people, using the expertise that had been cultivated within the Jewish community in recording oral history from Holocaust survivors. In September the JBD celebrated the 20th anniversary of the program, and Lucy Porter, Lorraine McGee-Sippel and I went along to the Jewish Museum to represent our ASC's book *Steppin' Out and Speakin' Up* which had received the major part of our funding from the trust.

Lorraine McGee-Sippel spoke about our book and Elverina Johnson spoke about *Blow'im*, the story of the Yarrabah Brass

Band in the early part of the 20th century. The most recent recipient, Albert Williams, is recording his stories by interweaving them into a book along with his life story, poems and paintings.

NSW Minister for Aboriginal affairs, Victor Dominello, spoke about his own Italian background and that there is no comparison between reading a history book and hearing personal stories.

Eleven awards have been given in the last 20 years to help record stories, some of which have become videos and books. Debbie Evans spoke about her Keewong Mob project, tracing family members.

*Pat Zinn*

## Too much sitting can be deadly

You probably suspected as much, but British, American and Australian researchers are all warning against too much sitting. Sitting in front of a computer for even an hour a day increases your chance of death from cancer or cardiovascular disease.

When you think of how much time is spent watching television or using a computer, this is not good news. Even a 30 minutes session of exercise each day will not cancel out these ill effects.

It is thought that sitting for long periods inhibits the body's ability to break down fat and glucose. This can have disastrous consequences.

However, it is not necessary to throw out your telly or computer. An Australian researcher, Professor David Dunstan, recommends two-minute breaks every 20 minutes.

To stave off the ill effects of prolonged sitting it is imperative that you have short, frequent, regular breaks. Up you get!

*Pat Rayne*

# OWN Writers



If I showed you the newsletters of comparable organisations to OWN both here, and overseas, you might be surprised. More often than not they are black and white, with articles scanned in from a variety of sources, mostly a compilation of government and community notices. This is probably because they are being produced without the resources we have. We are indeed fortunate. We have:

- A colour printer;
- An office with lots of computers;
- Beth, who coordinates the team, and does the desk top publishing;
- An editorial team whose members give blood, sweat and tears to get the articles proofed and ready;
- A large group of women who read the magazine;
- A group of women who write the letters, reports, stories, opinions, poetry and articles for *OWN Matters*;
- And most importantly, women who really communicate their fears, joy, anger, and grief in their writing.

You didn't know you were doing that? Let me tell you, you really are. The greatest assets and resources we have are the women who contribute their writing.

So what can you write now, whether you have written previously, or not?

Consider writing about your life, your area, your concerns, your ideas. If you want to respond to what someone else wrote in *OWN Matters*, whether you agree or not, go for it. Nothing like a good 'stoush' to liven things up! If you are angry about something in

your area, or with politicians or with the media, write about it.

As I said last month, write with anger, enthusiasm, passion, and feeling. 100 to 500 words on whatever is important to you.

Your writing is what we need. We can't really include downloads from the internet, because of copyright issues. Poetry always presents difficulties because it is extremely personal, and impossible to edit when space and time is tight. If you can't help but release the poet within, consider restricting your efforts to haiku, and you will be rewarded by instant publication - provided of course you do not offend, vilify or set us up for potential litigation!

If you read something that stimulates you, you could follow it up, cross check it for accuracy and maybe write something of your own on the subject.

This month I was really happy to see a couple of new writers. So you are out there.

Let's read more from any one of you. If you can talk, you can write.

*Lorraine Inglis*

---

## Grandma

Grandma Donkersley was large and had a gammy leg. When she managed to gain a perpendicular position she relied heavily on her walking stick. Her Yorkshire accent was a source of fascination to us.

Neroli was the scent that I associate with Grandma. Her room was chock-a-block with furniture. A chaise lounge upon which she passed most of her waking hours, a single bed, a fireplace with a very small fire grate made from heavy metal and her commode next to the window and to the bed. The other important gadget was a cream Kriesler Bakelite radio on which she listened to football on Saturday afternoons.

Sometimes she would tell us a story about how she travelled in a coach through the bush. This was when her husband had deserted her, to relieve himself of an ever growing responsibility. We later learned that when Grandpa died, Grandma got wind of his demise. Her friends told her she should get herself and the kids there, if she wanted a house to live in. We don't know who was looking after her at that time. What a life!

# OWN Writers

Naturally, as growing youngsters, our interests were mainly in Grandma's two plastic biscuit barrels. Her daughter, Marion, regularly filled them up so Grandma could indulge her sweet tooth. And so could we.

Grandma's dress was unusual to our eyes: always a skirt, a blouse and a cardigan, thick stockings and black shoes with a strap across her instep. She often wore a hair net to keep her thinning grey hair in place. Grandma would also have a brooch pinned to her blouse. Recently Mum told me that the only time Grandma went out of our house and garden was when she could use our perambulator to steady herself down the street to talk to neighbours and show off her latest grandchild. The pram was massive and I can see how this would have been quite useful for Grandma. One of my memories is of Grandma's huge bosom cradling the new baby and Grandma crooning to the child "poor little lambkin".

One of my jobs was to take a tray to Grandma as she really was, as we now say, disabled. She had her breakfast, lunch and dinner in her room. After Dad came home from his position as a compositor at the *News* in Adelaide on North Terrace, he would, especially in summer, share a beer or two with his mother. The atmosphere was respectful and largely silent as Dad wasn't a talker but he would share the taste of it with us. I can remember the fuzzy feel of the head and the bitter taste of the beer.

On some occasions, he would be over the road with a retired publican having a beer with them. We had brandy in those days mostly, I guess, for the Christmas pudding. But we now know that Grandma was brought up in a pub in her youth and I think that she was quite used to lots of other alcohol as well.

Many years later my mother discovered what being vulnerable really meant. After my father died and Grandma was still alive, unbeknown to our mother, the title deeds of the house we grew up in were in Grandma's name and not our father's. This meant that Mum, with six children, was not legally entitled to ownership of the family home.

How Legacy secured the property in my father's name rather than his mother's I don't know, but I do know that Mum must have been mightily relieved. My hope today is that women take care to address their legal rights so they may avoid such trauma.

*Glenys Buselli*

## The Changing Role of Grandmothers

An initiative of the Women's Action and Information Group (WAIG):

**WHEN:** Thursday November 3, 6.30pm refreshments for a 7:00pm start & finishing at 8:30pm.

**WHERE:** Meeting Room, Lane Cove Library, Longueville Rd, Lane Cove.

**CONTACT:** For catering purposes please email [waig@waig.org.au](mailto:waig@waig.org.au) or ring/leave a message on **0411 016 784** if you would like to attend.

See [www.waig.org.au](http://www.waig.org.au) for further information. THIS EVENT IS FREE OF CHARGE.

Key speakers:

- **Hélène Gonski**, the author *Grandparenting, A New Challenge* and instigator of grand parenting programs with the Council on the Ageing (NSW).
- **Judy Turner**, who raised her granddaughter from the age five and author of *Grand Love* which examines the challenges that grandparents often face as carers for their grandchildren.
- **Cate Turner**, an active member of the Older Women's Network and a long-standing leader and activist in a wide range of community initiatives.

Speakers will bring a personal and professional perspective as they discuss this increasingly complex role for women

What is the profile of the 21st century grandmother?

- Full-time in the workforce?
- Full or part time carer of grandchildren?
- Carer of ageing parents or an ageing partner?
- Perhaps travelling the world to see grandchildren or having no contact at all?
- Maybe a combination of some or all of the above?

WAIG acknowledges financial assistance from Lane Cove Council.

Join the Women's Action & Information Group (WAIG) as we explore this important topic that has become a reality for an increasing number of women

# Our Stories

## From Shoalhaven by Train

I see myself as a very analytical traveller. Like many Australians, I am used to the long distances many of us take for granted. Sometimes the journey is to Sydney or again it may be to far flung families in Australia or overseas.

It also affords an opportunity to bury oneself in a good book and since I still enjoy writing over time I have collected a variety of cherished stories which I willingly share as the train rattles away from the beautiful Shoalhaven.

There are always a few lovers who happily snuggle up, oblivious of everyone else. As an older traveller, it is easy to pick the 'don't speak to me' type and the 'motherly' type, who travels loaded with heavy bags preparing to give a helping hand in Sydney when a new baby is imminent. Another young woman I remember had an even heavier bag and when I offered to assist, she confessed with some embarrassment, that it was full of fish her husband had caught only that morning.

On another occasion, I proffered help in the course of conversation, when it transpired that a university student was having difficulty finding material for an assignment on heroes in the Pacific War. I suddenly recollected I had first-hand knowledge of an excellent example which might fit the bill in the sinking of HMS *Armidale* - a most harrowing story about a wartime tragedy. The account of this Australian corvette lived through a recording by an uncle who had been an able seaman on the small ship and who had been one of a number of survivors who had been unmercifully strafed by Japanese war planes flying low north of Darwin. The ship was sunk and the survivors drifted helplessly on spars of wood without food or water for eleven days. Knowing the end was very near for them all, they concocted a raft from drifting debris and miraculously, when all seemed lost, the crew was rescued. I obtained permission from the author for the lad to use the material from an account he had written of the incident.

Occasionally there is a rare jewel - someone with a fascinating background or who may share a mutual interest. Such a one was a young school girl who sat next to me some time ago. I observed her dark skin, luminous brown eyes and shining hair plaited in a neat coil. She stood out from the usual teenage crowd who seemed to gabble unceasingly. I smiled at her and asked if she was going to school. She revealed that she had been visiting her grandmother in Kiama and was on her way home.

She confided she hasn't lived here for very long, only since her father brought the family from Saudi Arabia. She went on to explain her father was an electronics engineer and it had been necessary to relocate because of the political unrest in that country.

Her grandmother had a roomy house at Whale Bay, so the son had helped her to settle in a more modest house on the south coast while he set up his business in North Sydney.

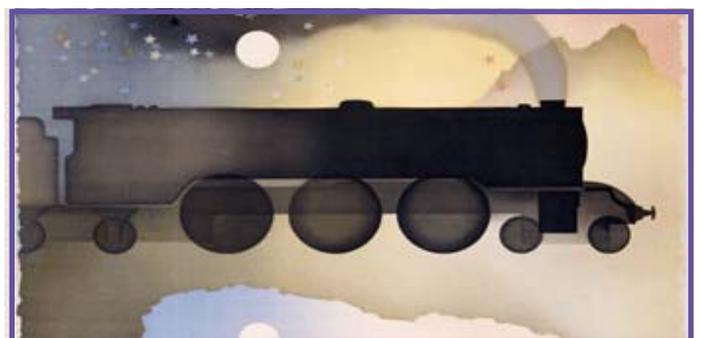
I thought of the upheaval it must have been for each member of this relocated family and admired how calmly the teenager seemed to accept the changes in a new environment. "I love my grandmother" she enthused. "She tells the best stories, she lets me eat what I want and I love her little dog." I felt sure the grandmother had equal pleasure in her granddaughter's company and imagined how she would miss her when she returned to Sydney. There was an openness about this spontaneous young girl, an attribute that is less pronounced in our Australian culture. I could only put it down to the home influence which appeared to encourage a close affiliation in family relationships.

Others have come and gone on these train journeys. I once spoke with a retired Jesuit priest who was enjoying judging fine Arabic race horses in his retirement.

Another contact was a dancer and a singer who still had her own gig in Sydney. She had come south to be near her adopted daughter and was willing to make frequent journeys to keep up with her friends and to go on performing.

Long train journeys need not be boring. Besides, those who know will assure you that our coastal views, rural outlook and our forests and mountain scenery have no match in NSW. Oops! Sorry, I have to go. The train is just pulling into Central Station, Sydney. The rush is on. Time to get on with life.

*Isabel MacCallum - Nowra OWN*



# Our Stories



## On Turning Eighty

Apart from appreciating an afternoon rest when I'm at home, giving me the opportunity to read a good book, I don't feel old. Maybe eighty, these days, is the new sixty!

Approaching the big 'O' I was mindful of the fact that my dad (who never had a birthday party in his life) said he would like one for his eightieth. Sadly, he died just three weeks prior to the party my sister and I were organising for him. Obviously I survived mine and although I generally prefer to keep a low profile, much to my surprise, I really enjoyed the lovely party my two daughters gave me. The champagne probably helped but it was great to catch up with extended family and friends.

I retired at sixty, the required age for females to do so by the company which employed me at the time. How sexist was that!

The following year my friend Wendy and I travelled to Egypt, Turkey and Greece then she went off to South Africa and my next destination was Italy. I had already been there two weeks when the late Helen Young persuaded me to extend my stay, so that she could join me.

Then I joined the Bankstown Wellness Centre, mainly for the exercise classes and the University of the Third Age (U3A) for mental stimulation. Interestingly, Illeana, the wonderful Gentle Exercise instructor at Bankstown at the time, now leads my Gentle Exercise class at a club in Ashfield.

To some extent genes determine one's life span but I believe that lifestyle is also an important factor. If one has a healthy diet, regular exercise and mental stimulation, together with sufficient rest, relaxation and companionship, one's chances of living to eighty and beyond are now probably better than ever.

*June West*

## Painting the Loo

Uncle had some explaining to do.

Sunstroke is no fun and having fair skin I was prone to it. So when Mum took us four kids to stay with an aunt, uncle and cousins at their beachside home, my brother Mark and I aged nine and six often stayed with Uncle when Mum and her sister took all the kids off to the beach.

I'm not sure where he used to go but sometimes Uncle used to be missing for long periods. Later I learned that he was sweet on the widow down the road. On one such occasion Mark and I found several paint tins with various amounts of paint in them and as the brushes were there too, we decided to brighten up something to surprise everyone.

The toilet out the back definitely needed attention so was chosen for our project. As there was not enough paint of any one colour we mixed a couple of lots together which turned into a lovely chocolate brown colour; just right for the inside of the outside loo. There was not a lot to paint in there but the back of the door looked lovely, as did the toilet itself, including the chocolate brown toilet seat.

Did I mention that paint in those days used to take several hours to dry? Not good really for a toilet seat in a household of seven with five extra visitors.

Some people do not recognise artistic talent when they see it and I don't remember Mark and I ever being left home (almost) alone again.

*Barbara Malcolm*

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## Shampoo Alert!

As I was conditioning my hair in the shower this morning, I took time to read my shampoo bottle. I am in shock!

The shampoo I use in the shower, that runs down my entire body says "for extra volume and body"! Seriously, why have I not noticed this before? Now I understand why I am so 'full-figured'!

Tomorrow I am going to start using Morning Fresh dishwashing liquid. It says right on the label 'dissolves fat that is otherwise difficult to remove'.

It pays to read the warning labels my friends!

*Contributed by Merril Woods*



## Australians urged to 'Show Us Your Lungs!'

New research shows that Australians are ignoring lung health - medical experts and celebrities are urging people to take lung health seriously.

New research shows the extent to which Australians are ignoring their lung health, with results revealing that one in three people do not consider their lungs to be important, even though 50 Australians die of lung disease each day.

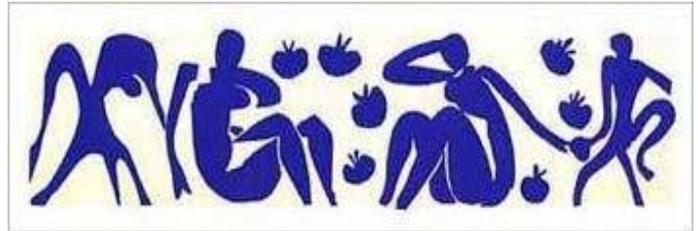
A News poll survey found that the majority of those surveyed (84% aged 35 and over) rated the health of their lungs as excellent, very good or good but one in three (36%) of them revealed they experience at least one of the signs of poor lung health.

The Lung Foundation is calling on Australians to 'Show Us Your Lungs!' and take lung health seriously as the gap in peoples' perception of their lung health and the reality of their condition is of concern to medical experts and peak bodies in Australia. Professor Christine Jenkins, Head of Airways Group, (Woolcock Institute of Medical Research and Lung Foundation) said, "The survey results indicate that people aren't recognising signs of poor lung health and probably not speaking to their doctors about their symptoms".

A total of 43% of Australians aged 35 and over say they experience at least one of the following symptoms of lung disease:

- get breathless from walking up a small flight of stairs with between 8-12 steps
- a chest infection at least twice a year
- a new cough, a persistent cough, or their cough has recently changed,
- regularly cough up phlegm (not due to a cold or flu)
- an unexplained ache in their chest or back area, a wheeze or sometimes a feeling of tightness in their chest

Professor Jenkins urged people with symptoms to speak to their doctor about their lung health. Many lung diseases are treatable if they are



properly diagnosed. Identifying the early signs of lung disease and acting early is important. She also encouraged people to take a minute to complete the Lung Foundation's Lung Health Checklist on line at [www.lungfoundation.com.au](http://www.lungfoundation.com.au).

*The Lung Foundation*



### Aqua ladies strip for good cause

When a group of inner-west women started aqua aerobics at the local pool, they had no idea that it would lead to more than just fitness – least of all, posing for a glamorous calendar.

Their plan is to sell the calendar, depicting women of the 'art nouveau' period of the early 1900s in a beautiful and tasteful way, to raise money to support Multiple Sclerosis Australia (MS).

The women have become firm friends over the past few years following an aquarobics class at the Annette Kellerman Aquatic Centre and enjoyed many social events together, including lunches, dinners, even week-ends away.

The aqua ladies have been photographed looking more glamorous than in their wildest fantasies.

Sales proceeds will go to MS Australia so they can continue to provide a wide range of services to people with MS, support their families and carers and keep up with the latest developments in research and treatment. This calendar would make an ideal Christmas gift.

Calendars cost \$15.99 each plus postage or ordered on line from eBay (Grand Delusions) in November or by Fax: 9666 9903

# At and Beyond the Rocks



## Thanks OWN!

I was trained as a nurse many years ago. Back then we did not have computers and all our records were hand written so I didn't get a chance to learn to type.

So, when Bankstown Group received their laptop, courtesy of FaHCSIA and OWN NSW, I didn't think I would be able to use it and I didn't understand why I *would* need to use it!

Then, Jan Malley, our Coordinator, organised a Beginner's Guide to the Internet course, especially put on for the Management Committee by staff from Bankstown Library (and it was free!). This gave me an inkling of what the internet was all about and began to spark my interest. I have two daughters living overseas: one in England and one in India and I miss them a lot. Maybe, I thought, I could learn how to send them emails!

Jan then began offering lessons with her in her office - an offer too good to refuse.

With her help, I set up a Hotmail address and, using two fingers, I painstakingly typed out my first email to my daughter, Loretta, who is living in London. When my daughter received it she was thrilled and very encouraging!

There is still much to learn, but I am feeling very enthusiastic now and keen to learn more.

*Vivienne Manson*

*Bankstown OWN Group & OWN Bankstown  
Wellness Centre Management Committee  
Member*

## OWN NSW Basic Computer Training for OWN Group Coordinators

OWN NSW has organized for 4 final training sessions to take place with Forrest Computer Training at 7/83 York Street, Sydney NSW 2000 (see [map](#) this page >)

## Internet Explorer Basics

Dates: 8 November OR 17 November.  
From 9 am to 12.00 midday.

By the end of the course you should be able to:

- ◆ Get started with Internet Explorer
- ◆ Use Explorer basics and search the Internet
- ◆ Use Favourites and work with Web
- ◆ Learn Outlook Express basics
- ◆ Send, receive and reply to e-mail messages
- ◆ Use the Address book

## Microsoft Word Basics

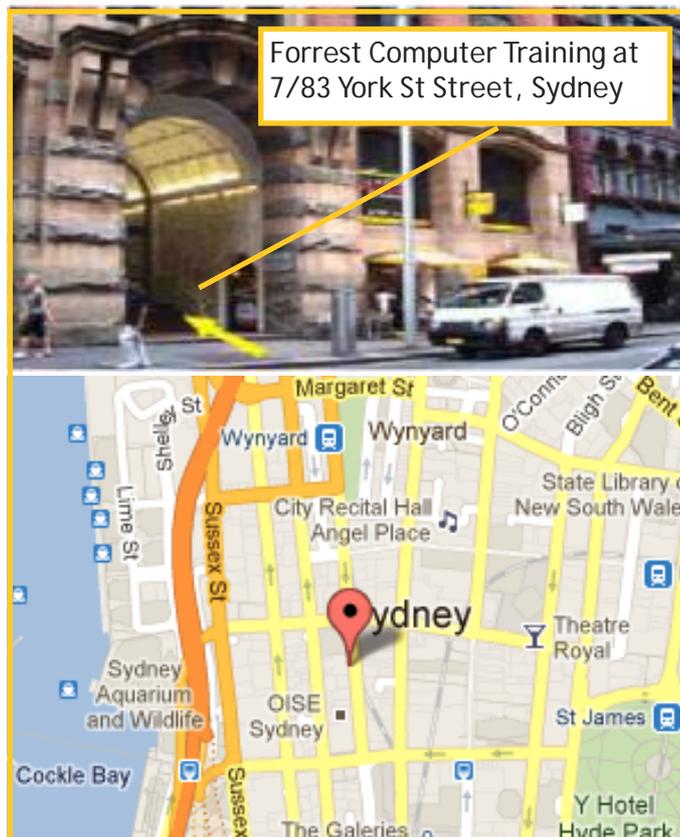
Dates: 22 November OR 24 November.  
From 9 am to 12.00 midday.

By the end of the course you should be able to:

- ◆ Create, edit and save documents
- ◆ Change the appearance and layout of a document using basic formatting techniques
- ◆ Preview and print documents
- ◆ Use Spell Checker, Thesaurus, Find/Replace and AutoCorrect

Each participant will have their own computer. We have requested an older female trainer. You will need to arrive by 8.45.

Places are limited, call [9247 7046](tel:92477046), and book your place/s. This really is your last chance to make use of this great FaHCSIA grant



Forrest Computer Training at  
7/83 York St Street, Sydney

# At and Beyond the Rocks



## OWN Sydney AGM

It was a surprise indeed to find that I had not missed OWN Sydney AGM on my return from England. Thanks are due to OWN NSW for stepping into the breach, laying on a great sandwich lunch, and welcoming all those who attended. We all wish the six new committee members well.

I would like to wish Veronica Willis and Betty Johnson continued satisfaction and enjoyment in their work for the committee. They are great team members. Marjorie Moffat and I will still be kicking around, wearing our other hats, but after six/seven years of committee work I've done my dash and am hanging up the one marked OWN Sydney.

It has been great to go out on a high note after being your delegate to the conference and AGM in Perth, an occasion of inspiring ideas and information, meeting many new OWN women and making friends, having a lot of laughs, great fun performing, and plenty of wine. Thank you all for sending me.

*Brigid Sen*

## What is The Sydney Alliance?

The Sydney Alliance is a non-political organisation. It is about building a strong civil society.

The Sydney Alliance is about bringing together diverse community organisations, unions and religious organisations to advance the common good and achieve a fair, just and sustainable city. We do this by providing opportunities for people to have a say in decisions that affect them, their families and everyone working and living in Sydney.

To achieve this vision The Sydney Alliance builds bridges and dialogue between organisations to enable these and their members to achieve positive and ethical outcomes. The Alliance provides opportunities for people to participate in reshaping their society because we believe in the potential of people to grow and develop as leaders, on their own behalf. We build grassroots power that respects the contribution and dignity of all people.

Since our Founding Assembly on 15 September, 2011, we have focused on transport within Sydney as our first concern. We have other groups working on other concerns such as building community harmony and many health issues.

If you would like to join in and become involved contacts are below.

*Amanda Tattersall - Coalition Director*

02 8007 6055

atattersall@sydneyalliance.org.au: twitter.com/sydneyalliance: www.sydneyalliance.org.au

## Lost Ladies November, December 2011

**Nov 9** 10 am at the National Art School for the Post Graduate and Masters Degree students exhibition.

**Nov 16** 9.50am at the coffee shop at the end of the Footbridge Theatre at Sydney University for a Nicholson Museum tour of the Etruscans exhibition then to the Art Gallery across the courtyard for Jeffrey Smart and, if time or enthusiasm permits, to the Macleay for an exhibition on the use of the colour red through the ages. Stairs only to the Art Gallery but flat access and lift at the others. Charge \$5.

**Nov 23** 10 am in the foyer of the Australian Museum, College Street, for the exhibition of the Scott sisters, botanical illustrators from 19<sup>th</sup> Century and truly lost ladies.

**Nov 30** 11 am at Windmill Street for guest speaker, Sue Field, OWN member and expert in the legal and financial fields of our time of life. Get your questions ready re Medical Guardianship, etc. Then, around 12.15, we'll have Christmas lunch, BYO usual Christmas yummy goodies and a Christmas present to exchange (maximum value \$10).

**Dec 7** 11am at the S.H.Ervin for Tim Storrier. Charge \$8.

# At and Beyond the Rocks

## Wyong Potpourri

No, Wyong OWN has not packed up its tent and disappeared into the night. As its scribe I'm afraid my "Get Up and Go" got up and went. I ended up in Wyong Hospital with blood dripping into one arm and a louverly iron mixture dripping into the other. Whatever you do never approach me with a large magnet. It will be impossible to pull me away! By the way the hospital care was first rate, the food was just disgusting and I came home after a short stay because of a "bed jam".

Sadly I missed out on going to Newcastle with our merry band. They went to see the newly opened Newcastle Museum and came home full of praise for its layout, especially the section designed for children. Have to make the easy trip myself before it becomes too hot.

At our last monthly meeting we had an interesting discussion about "Meals on Wheels". A number of our members are volunteers. I became interested in this topic when I read a section in our local Liberal member's newsletter. Like most people I thought volunteers did the cooking and delivered hot meals to those who require this service.

It appears that under the Future Food Project, the meals are frozen and left on the front door step for collection. Under Health and Safety regulations the volunteers no longer take the food inside. I don't know about you but this lead me to some awful conclusions in relation to the frail and aged. On October 11, I wrote to Gary Edwards MP asking for information as who is the head of the Future Food Project. To date I have received no reply but perhaps he has been busy in State Parliament helping to work out how they can cut back on the number of emergency services workers and their salaries.

On Friday October 21 six of us went to Niagara Park to join the Brisbane Waters OWN. Firstly we wanted to meet them as we are having our end of the year bash together at the Gosford Hotel. Secondly because we wanted to hear their guest speaker Emeritus Professor Richard Collins speaking on the subject of the carbon tax and global climate change.

I'm not going to steal their thunder as I am sure they will send in a full report. What I want to say is that it was a stunning lecture, chock full of scientific data that was easy to follow. Sadly this learned scientist does not see much hope for the future even though he is a dyed-in-the-wool optimist.

You cannot get away from the fact that water levels are rising, and more so in the Northern Hemisphere. However, we know from the news that some low level islands in the Pacific Ocean are already going underwater. Oh, how I wished shock jock Alan Jones had been there to hear Richard, along with all the others who deny that our world is changing. Sadly it is us humans who are causing it.

I must say that it was a bit of a shock to hear that dear old London Town is sinking. Why? Well, the last ice age left it askew and now, with the rising sea level, it is sinking. No, not at a rapid rate. If I remember correctly, at 3mms a year, but multiply that by a decade and it becomes 3 cms. That is why they erected the barriers across the Thames for when there is a very large tide level.

Does anyone else feel a little stunned at how fast 2011 has zapped by? So I guess now is the time to wish one and all a happy Christmas and a busy New Year from all at Wyong OWN.

*June Goss*

## **Income Management in Bankstown**

This is a special announcement asking you to sign an important e-petition. Tell the government not to bring compulsory Income Management to Bankstown!

Sign here: <http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/call-for-a-moratorium-on-government-income-management.html>

For the people who qualify under the rules of the new program, it means the government would control how you spent a large portion of your money. Bankstown has been chosen because we are a 'disadvantaged' community.

Let's pay attention to the lessons of the Northern Territory Intervention and the shame and stigma it brought upon residents up there... not to mention the research showing that the scheme put women in fear, at risk, and sometimes worse off than before.

Please sign the petition and forward it to all your friends and networks.

*Kristina Brenner, Bankstown Women's Health Centre 97901378*

For more info on how income management has affected other residents in Australia see:

<http://www.jumbunna.uts.edu.au/researchareas/newmedia/abolishincomemanagement.html>

# Theatre Group Report



On Sunday, October 9, all twelve of us got up very early to meet at the airport for our 8 am flight to Perth. We were on our way to the AGM conference to give two performances. On arrival a bus took us to Point Walter beside the Swan River, where we offloaded our luggage, and then into Fremantle to fill in some time before our rooms were available – cabins with bunk beds an interesting experience. Point Walter is a lovely venue, off the beaten track and park-like, with a great view of Perth across the Swan, and walks along the shore with wildflowers, white sand, and shells galore.

On Monday afternoon we performed our first show for the conference. Three representatives from The Alliance for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, WA, were in the audience and after our performance they addressed the conference. As Elder Abuse is also the subject matter of our show, *Don't Knock Your Granny*, what they had to say underlined the content of the show pretty closely. We felt we had given a powerful performance and acquitted ourselves well.

Tuesday was taken up with the business of the conference but we found time to rehearse Our Village People show for the following day – in the open with no music, Bettina-Annie beating two sticks together to keep us in time. It must have been worth it because our performance on Wednesday, in Thornlie on a real stage in a real theatre, was a cracker. The Illawarra drummers gave a great performance, too, to great acclaim and the OWN Theatre Group, Perth, opened the show with some of their numbers. As we were backstage and could only watch them on a tiny monitor, it was hard to see and hear them well. Another highlight was the Spirit of the Street choir; lovely voices and very moving stories, followed by a first rate sandwich lunch.

In October we have two further performances to give: “Village People” at Mental Health Week Forum in Ryde, and *DKYG* at a conference in Gosford on abuse of older people, which you can read about next month.

Brigid Sen



## Meet Ellen Dzienisz

Ellen Dzienisz is a lively 95 year old OWN WA member who has an early connection with OWN Sydney. I met her at the Perth Conference energetically attending all sessions with her walker. She raised questions in the open sessions and sang along with her beloved OWN WA Theatre Group. She was delighted to tell me that over 20 years ago she came to Sydney from Perth because she'd heard about a national movement for older women being planned in Sydney. She immediately became an individual member of OWN. Ellen can be considered a founder of OWN who took the good tidings to Perth and helped get it going in WA. Originally from England, Ellen was especially disgusted that women could not get loans in their own right. That sense of injustice fuelled her activity in women's issues. One of her brightest memories is of the WA Theatre Group's most popular performances which was based on the Edith Cowan story. This was actually performed once in Edith Cowan's own home in Geelong!



# In Our OWN Write

## Forgiveness

At one time or another we have all been emotionally hurt by someone. In most people that emotional injury remains with them for a long time. That bundle of pain is like a poison. It sits there corroding our emotional wellbeing. Forgiveness, which in the past has been associated with religion and philosophy, can have a place in our life. In the last 15 years the movement of Positive Psychology has embraced forgiveness as a coping strategy in response to a transgression. Forgiveness can dissolve pain.

Unforgiving has been associated with stress, anger, anxiety, hostility, resentment, animosity, hatred, bitterness, revengefulness - emotions that can damage our psychological wellbeing.

Holding a grudge, refusing to let go of anger and blaming is harmful, not only for our psychological wellbeing but also for our physical health as negative emotions are stressors that accumulate over time.

Forgiveness is for the person who forgives, not for the benefit of the transgressor. Forgiveness does not involve denying, ignoring, minimising, tolerating, condoning, excusing or forgetting the offence. Forgiveness does not require reconciliation.

You forgive for your own benefit and not to please a God, a higher power, or the aggressor. You forgive because it will liberate you from the chains of pain. So if you have been hurt, let go and forgive; you will feel great.

*Beatriz Copello*

## Dear God

I am writing today to have words with you, God.  
You've made so many mistakes in my life, you're a sod.

My John you took, but why dither so long.

It took ten days before he was gone.

He lay in a coma for ten long days.

Why can't you act quickly and spare us this way?

Now my beautiful son, at the peak of his life,

Lovely kids, great home and wonderful wife,

All the scrapes he had, growing up and beyond,

You saved him and carried him on a wing and a song.

You took him at fifty. Why now such a hurry?

You gave him no time to enjoy. Why the flurry?

You've left a wife and two children in an empty nightmare

And a mother so angry her thoughts she can't bear.

There's no reason, no rhyme in this thing you have done.

For no valid reason, you've taken my first son.

He was clean living and welcoming to all in his path,

Caring and loving and enjoyed a good laugh.

Why people believe in your being makes me ponder.

How can you exist? Don't you care of this blunder?

You wipe out the young, leaving the old in distress.

You seem not to care of the heartache and mess.

I'm warning you, God and you know this is true,

Touch my Nisey or Ian, I will definitely sue.

*Coral Littlewood*



## Hastings Older Women's Network

We are an older women's group  
We meet each month to fly the coop

There are ladies short, there are ladies tall  
And we always have a ball

We are a happy friendly cheerful lot  
And we do not care a single jot

If they say that we are old & grey  
Because they, too will be one day

We have a lucky door and raffle prize  
This brings a smile to the lucky one's eyes

Guest speakers come to educate,  
entertain and amuse  
We learn a lot, with all this news

We all had fun when we were young  
But with this life we are not done

We have aches and pains and tired  
old bones  
But we are not a bunch of drones



We are happy, busy as the bees  
And still love to kick up our knees

*Gloria Sonter*

# Women's Business

## Get on Board

“Under new guidelines, key Government bodies such as Australia Post and the National Broadband Network Company will have to focus on gender diversity in their board appointments. The revised guidelines strengthen board appointment processes, ensuring Government Business Enterprises (GBEs) take note of the Gillard Government’s 40% target for women on boards. This will be done through a clear statement of expectation that gender balance is to be achieved in line with the Government’s target. At the moment 29% of positions on boards are filled by women. The revised GBE guidelines - which have not been updated since 1997 - will take effect immediately. They are part of the overall governance framework for GBEs and complement *The Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act, 1997...*” Senator Penny Wong

The 2011 *Gender Diversity on Australian Boards* survey was conducted online in late August by leading advocate for boardroom change, *Women on Boards (WOB)*.

According to *Women on Boards*, in 2011

- 10.9% of directorship positions in ASX200 companies are held by women;
- 87 ASX200 companies still do not have a woman on their board;
- The banking and retail sectors lead the way;
- To reach the WOB target of 25 per cent female directors by 2012, ASX200 companies will need to double their rate of female appointments in 2011;
- Beyond ASX300 is still a virtual no-go zone for women.

Despite a much trumpeted increase in the percentage of women on ASX200 companies from 8.4 to 12.9 per cent in the past two years, we also need to remember that the ASX200 is only one story and the numbers have not changed for companies further down the ASX, superannuation bodies and credit unions, sporting organisations and across other sectors measured in our Boardroom Diversity Index.

“With only 58 per cent of women working in Australia and a gender pay gap of 17.2% - the failure to use and reward all of our productive human capital is a major issue for business, the government and the economy,” a *Women on Boards* spokesperson said.

Recently I received the papers from the Teachers

Credit Union, telling me I needed to vote in the election of the Teachers Credit Union Board and Members Committee. I looked at the ballot paper; one woman and ten men. I was shocked, so I rang the TCU to find out the percentage of women on the board. I was put through to Jillian Tatt, who cheered me up for the day. The number of women on the board is 44%. This is much higher than any other board.

*Women on Boards* keeps a record of the boards and percentages of women on those boards and it is these numbers that make some women support the drive to have more women on boards. Eva Cox would argue that conservative men appoint conservative women to positions on boards, and that does nothing for the women in greatest need.

While I support the need to legislate to increase the number of women on boards, I believe there is a much greater need to legislate to improve the income of women at the other end of the pay scale. The struggle against the feminisation of poverty is of far greater importance.

Last week the ‘board’ of OWN NSW wasn’t thinking of how to get more women into powerful positions. We held our “Bags of Change” event, to raise money for a women’s refuge which provides home, shelter and help to older women escaping violence. It was our activity for Anti-Poverty Week, our attempt to struggle against the feminisation of poverty.

I know being on a board in a voluntary organisation takes time, gives little recognition and is not exciting but it starts with you. If you are concerned about women not being on boards, you could start with one of the organisations in which you are involved and ‘Get on Board’.

*Lorraine Inglis*

## Options to Vest

I noticed this unfamiliar phrase in an article by Michael West in the *Sydney Morning Herald Business Day* and found it intriguing. I worked out that an option to vest means that one is given ownership of shares that can then be sold.

The article was about the Commonwealth Bank’s board of directors. The directors had set aside a profit pool to be shared among the board members should the CBA perform better than other Australian banks in performance hurdles based on customer service.

# Women's Business

When the system was established in 2008, the Bank aimed to be ranked at least third out of five banks over a three year period for the options to be vested to the directors. (The directors were not setting the hurdle too high.) The success of customer service was to be ascertained by such things as customer satisfaction surveys.

Over time, and because the Australian banks have done so well during the Global Financial Crisis, thanks to Federal Government guarantees, the CBA profit pool to be vested grew to about \$36 million. Also during this time, all banks endeavoured to improve customer service, which had been abysmal, so when the five banks were ranked according customer service in 2011, the CBA only managed to come fourth.

According to the rules set up in 2008, the CBA board of directors wouldn't get their hands on any of the \$36 million. However, the board found a loophole in the annual report that enabled it to use 'its discretion' to permit 25% of the pool to be 'vested'. Under this innovative high seas corporate law of profit salvage, the board will now be able to share \$8.5 million amongst themselves in 2012. This is, of course, in addition to any other payments that are made to the directors.

Compared with the CBA profit of \$6 billion, \$8.5 million doesn't seem much but to most ordinary people it's a mighty lot of money.

Most people do not have the luxury of setting their own performance goals, and a lavish reward for achieving them, let alone the ability to change the rules and get lots of money even if you fail. If only it was that easy for everyone!

*Pat Rayne*

## Australia Appoints Global Ambassador for Women and Girls

The Gillard Government has appointed career diplomat Penny Williams as Australia's first Global Ambassador for Women and Girls.

Women and girls make up two thirds of the one billion people in the world who lack basic literacy skills, with almost 35 million girls world-wide not getting even basic primary-level education. By improving access to education and health services for women and girls, we are able to lift families and communities out of poverty.

The Ambassador's priorities include co-ordinating and promoting Australia's work to eradicate violence against women, improving access to services for women, the protection of women and girls in conflict zones and increasing the representation of women in leadership roles.

The gender equality initiatives the Australian Government has driven over the past few years are significant, most particularly the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children which is being used by UN Women internationally as a model for other countries.

At home, Ms Williams will champion the needs of women and girls in Australia's foreign policy thinking. On the world stage, she will be an international advocate for the Australian Government's work

## Seniors returning to work

Watching your superannuation lose one fifth of its value over the last few months because the share market has the 'wobblies' is very discomfoting for people approaching retirement or already retired. To counter this and restore the style of retirement you had planned means returning to work.

On the up side, it is a good time for older workers to be looking for work as the low rate of unemployment means there are jobs available. The mining boom and Australia's robust economy have created a demand for workers who would otherwise have been passed over, including older workers.

The prejudice against older workers is based on stereotypes that older people are slower, less adaptable and less energetic than younger workers or they will not fit in. We know these are widely held beliefs so it is important that the older worker addresses these when applying for work.

As I am sure you are aware, most jobs are advertised and applied for on-line. This can be used to your advantage as you can promote your strengths initially without being 'eyeballed'. When interviewed, be prepared to vigorously dispel the common preconceptions concerning older workers.

In your application and your interview, choose three or four things that you are really good at and support them with specific examples. Above all, make sure that you demonstrate 'energy' in your interview and at work.

*Pat Rayne*

# Last Words

## Bags of Change

Our **Anti-Poverty Week** event, Bags of Change, has so far has raised over \$1100 for Rosalie House. OWN chose to undertake this activity as part of our program to prevent violence against older women and to increase awareness of the issue of homelessness amongst older women, and the difficulties they face trying to access support and accommodation services.

Between 2007 and 2009,

- older women actually outnumbered older men in requests for services for the first time on record

- the number of women aged over 65 seeking crisis accommodation in Sydney more than doubled.

In response to this need, the Sydney Archdiocese of the St Vincent de Paul Society established **Rosalie House** in order to provide medium term supported accommodation for women between the ages of 45 and 60 who were escaping domestic violence.

**Rosalie House** opened its doors, in August 2009. The women housed there are offered up to two years subsidised accommodation to give them time to heal and find permanent housing.

Because Rosalie House is one of the few refuges dedicated to older women, OWN NSW wanted to find a way to show our support. We devised the **Bags of Change** campaign.

Huge thanks to for all the women who made it such a success.

OWN NSW



**ANTI-POVERTY WEEK**  
16 - 22 October 2011

# Notices

## Every Australian Counts

A lot of people out there haven't heard about the NDIS and the potential it has to dramatically improve the lives of people with disabilities.

**We need more people to hear about the campaign. If support grows and momentum builds, the NDIS will be secured for all Australians.**

There are three things you can do from November 27 - December 3 to spread the word. What can you do?

It's easy - you can sign up your friends, neighbours, colleagues or family members, pepper letterboxes with campaign information sheets or hold a community stall.

**We need your help to make sure more people with disabilities and their families have a voice in our community.**

Take a few minutes, a couple of hours or a whole day - the choice is yours.

Register today to spread the word in your backyard, workplace, street or the local shopping centre. We will send you all you need to get the NDIS out into the community

Whatever you do it will make a difference to people living with a disability and their families.

*John Della Bosca and the Every Australian Counts team*

[www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au](http://www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au)

## Politics in the Pub Gaelic Club

Level 1, 64 Devonshire Street  
Surry Hills  
Every Friday night, 6.00-7.45pm



For more information:  
[www.politicsinthepub.org.au](http://www.politicsinthepub.org.au)  
Facebook: Politics in the Pub (Sydney)

# OWN Sydney Notices

## WOW! Subscribe NOW!

Subscription to *OWN Matters* is \$22 per year, due every JULY 1!

Want to join **OWN Sydney** at the same time? We can fix this up in the same way, if you tick this box and include just another \$5

Would you like to donate? \$.....

### Payment method

I enclose a chq/money order for \$22 - covers to Jun30, 2012 made payable to OWNNSW **OR** Please debit the following credit card for \$22 (plus any donation)

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With my best wishes!

## Members and friends are welcome to attend all activities

### Wellness on Wednesdays

9.30am-1.30 pm every Wednesday

Held in Mott Hall, Argyle St., Millers Point.

9.30 - 10.30 Gentle Exercise, \$5 per session.

10.45 - 11.45 Tai Chi, \$5 per session.

### Lost Ladies

10.00am every Wednesday during school terms,

exploring various locations or topics of interest. See page 16.

Contact Annette Butterfield: 9665 5369 email:

abutterfield\_852@hotmail.com

### Film Discussion group

You are invited to join us on Tuesday 8 November

to see *Midnight in Paris*. Recommended for

viewing is *Anonymous*.

Please ring Yetty on 9665 2050 to check details of films.

### Bondi Junction Coffee and Gossip Group

25 November 11am The Coffee Shop,

Eastern Suburbs Leagues Club.

Last Friday of every month. Contact Yetty on 9665 2050

to check details.

### Book Club

21 November 12.30-2.30 pm at 87 Lower Fort Street.

This month's books are: *The Broken Shore* by Peter Temple.

Come at 12 and bring a sandwich for lunch at midday.

Any questions, phone Anne Marie on 9622 0717. Note: Book to be

discussed at the 12 December meeting is

*The BEye of The Storm* by Patrick White.

### Aboriginal Support Circle

Usually meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 10.30 am,

at 75 Windmill Street, unless we are going to art exhibitions

or places of interest. Confirm all details with

Pat Zinn: 9389 1090 or email patzinn@hotmail.com

### Saturday Social Group at Birkenhead Point

We meet from 10.30 a.m. to 12.00 noon at Birkenhead Café,

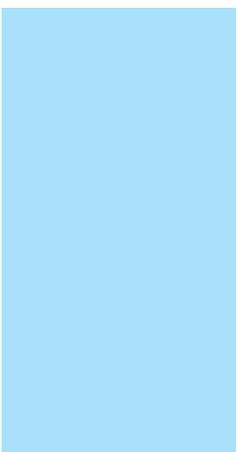
1<sup>st</sup> floor Birkenhead Shopping Complex.

Contacts: Nora Huppert 9181 3918 and Bev Cameron 9957 5367.

The dates are Saturdays 5 and 19 November.

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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