



OWN MATTERS

NSW Ageing Strategy. Review on Strata and Community Laws.

War time women. Airports offer a lesson in humility.

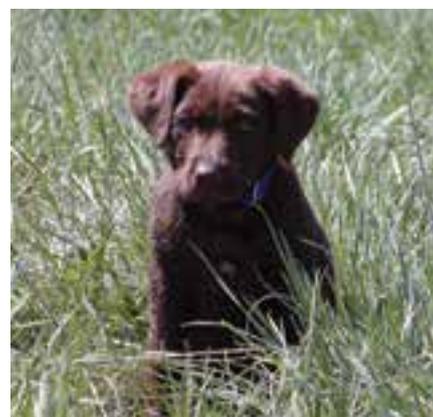
Camping Tradition faces new pitch. Heritage Despots.

Sleepless in Brisbane. Water Assistance. Animal Legacies



Should Your Pets Inherit ?

Could loyal companions be shown the same legal considerations as other family members when we pass away?



New lessons in unusual places

Pack up and journey to the airport for a day of learning in unpacking, humility and patience.



Good Ending to Sad Story

One mum's happy birthday after years of wondering what happened to her adopted baby



Answering the call to work

Remembering a time when war changed the role of women forever as they joined the WAAAF.



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Who Are We?

The Older Women's Network (OWN) NSW is the peak body for 19 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 \$25 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

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More help always welcome!

OWN Office

From 10am-3pm the phone is answered by one of our friendly volunteers. Out of office hours, you should leave a message, with your contact number.

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New NSW Ageing Strategy offers opportunities for members to contribute ideas for policy initiatives and changes

The NSW Ageing Strategy, launched by the Hon. Andrew Constance, Minister for Ageing, earlier this year, provides challenging opportunities for OWN NSW. As an organisation of older women with wide variation in ages among our membership we are in a unique position to make practical suggestions for policy initiatives in important areas.

To take up this challenge OWN NSW Management Team will be inviting contributions from members of OWN Groups. A number of issues have been identified as a result of the OWN NSW Forum on Ageism last August, and at the AGM in October. Further suggestions were also obtained from OWN Group coordinators in preparation for a planning meeting of the Management Team earlier this month.

Key concerns to emerge so far include a variety of health related issues including the ageist attitude of many health professionals, affordable and flexible housing, available and accessible transport, violence prevention and appropriate responses to older women living

with violence. The work of OWN NSW for the next two years or so will focus on identifying the specific concerns related to these and other issues and how they might be progressed. Working collaboratively with OWN Groups and other organisations will be a key aspect of this program as well as the objective to be inclusive of all older women.

An important announcement in the NSW Ageing Strategy is the intention of the Government to 'establish a helpline and resource centre to reduce the abuse of older people'. It is pointed out that the new service 'will provide practical assistance to older people, family members and frontline workers, on ways to reduce abuse'.

The involvement of OWN NSW in the prevention of violence against older women over a number of years has alerted us to the complexity of needs older women experience who live with violence. It will be important to maintain a 'watching brief' on this new service when established and to provide feedback as appropriate.

Improving public transport accessibility to the targets in the Australian Government's Accessible Transport Standards, by 2022, is also stated as an objective in the NSW Ageing Strategy.

We know that practical opportunities exist for improving access to public transport not just in terms of extension of rail and bus services but also in terms of actually getting on and/or off trains and buses.

Hearing about your experiences would be useful for identifying strategies for change.

The New Year promises to be a busy one with lots of ideas to follow up. Contributions of practical suggestions from OWN members and friends will be greatly appreciated. The NSW Ageing Strategy is a good place to start.

Copies of the NSW Ageing Strategy can be obtained online at www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/ageing or phone 9248 0900.

Sonia Laverty
Chairperson
OWN NSW Management Team

At and Beyond the Rocks

News from Wellness

We are all slowly winding down to the end of 2012 and looking forward to whatever challenges 2013 will bring. 2012 has been a year of highs, some lows and a lot of in between.

It's also been a year of change as we said goodbye to Pat Donaghy in Sutherland and Jan Malley in Bankstown. Both were long and hardworking members of team wellness and the loss of their enthusiasm, knowledge and leadership will be felt.

We have not lost Pat from the organization though as she has agreed to return to the Management Team of OWN NSW and though our loss is their gain, we know we are still in her thoughts and she will have lots to contribute to team management. To Jan we offer good health and a long and bright future.

Jan's loss will be bearable as she has left a well oiled machine at the Bankstown Older Women's Wellness Centre and her help in the selection of Dianne Brooks to replace her bodes well for the continued smooth and successful running of the Centre.

During this year Bankstown has undergone more than a change of leadership. The building they operate in, the PCYC, has been undergoing major reconstruction.

The whole building was gutted and is still in the process of being rebuilt and a new kitchen installed. The Centre was able to operate during these renovations as workmen were very careful working around the classes and protection has been set up in an effort to cause as little disruption as possible.

Once the new work is complete Bankstown Wellness Centre will have a state of the art building for their members and facilitators.

The other five Centres continue to flourish and, together with Bankstown, build relationships with local councils, doctors and community organizations.

It is hard to attract recognition for the work we do to enhance the wellness and wellbeing of the older women in our areas, so it is a credit to the volunteers that they have been able to build such healthy relationships within these entities.

The most exciting and promising news to come from 2012 is that OWN Wellness is to become a subject of a NSW Health research study into what it is about OWN Wellness centres that benefits the overall health and wellbeing of older women.

A Project Advisory Committee has been set up and will be the key body to receive reports on the project and be responsible for advice and direction. The final report is due on 1 June 2013. We are optimistic that the outcomes will gain added support from NSW Health for the work and service we offer to older women at our wellness centres.

The volunteers of all the centres are looking forward to the Christmas break and to the New Year when they will continue to offer older women from all walks of life a holistic and non-judgemental approach to their physical health and wellbeing.

A place where they will be made welcome; be offered facilitators who are highly trained to present their services; and volunteers who love doing what they do. A Merry Christmas and Peace to all.

Barbara Malcolm





What an amazing eight weeks!

Off to a running start since joining OWN Wellness Centre Bankstown, I have learned so much and enjoyed meeting so many wonderful and talented women. Our membership is quite diverse both culturally and linguistically with a wide range of cultures and nationalities represented in the Bankstown Local Government area.

Future plans include tapping into this diversity and wealth of culture and language and encourage our members to explore and share the cultural knowledge and awareness.

I am hoping some of our members will become the facilitators of this project by teaching each other through their life stories.

Our Arabic speaking group is small but has a lot of potential to grow and I am currently in the planning phase of a joint project with the United Muslim Women Association in order to promote our Gentle Exercise program to their members.

Our Greek OWN group has been proactive in holding a fundraising luncheon to support Breast Cancer Awareness, where they raised over \$4000 for research and education – it was a brilliant effort.

I love their idea and many members have expressed interest in holding a similar luncheon next October, representing the whole of OWN Bankstown.

My community network connections are growing as I attend meetings and introduce myself as “the new Jan”. Local women’s health community representatives have joined together to support the establishment of a Women’s and Children’s Refuge in Bankstown.

The inaugural meeting was called by the local State Member, Tania Mihailuk MP, with the aim of investigating

opportunities to make this refuge a reality.

The current statistics support the need for crisis accommodation in Bankstown and I stressed the importance of ensuring that the needs of older women are represented during the consultation and development phase.

Our much needed sound system has been purchased and was in operation on 12th November, much to everyone’s joy. Health and Safety requirements demand the system can be safely and easily transported. This was resolved with the addition of a light weight collapsible trolley and a safety strap.

All is now working effectively; our volunteers are safe and the system is safely secure under the watchful eyes of our wonderful PCYC Manager who has volunteered to store it in his office. Talk about team work!

We were successful with a Volunteer Grant application which was supposed to cover the cost of the sound system but was not sufficient to purchase a good quality system.

I have requested a variation to the grant, the idea now being the purchase of a good quality SLR camera with video which can be used to record all the brilliant events and moments that make our Bankstown Centre the great place it is.

So many plans and ideas!

Diane Brooks



Theatre Group report



Wow, we've made it to the end of the year and what a great year it's been for the Theatre Group and for OWN.

It's so nice to have come through with our members enjoying laughter, high energy and a strong motivation to carry on into 2013. A new show is in the planning and I'm sure some of our creative writers will be penning numbers over the break.

You've read about us during the year, seen us perform, and lifted our hearts and spirits. So here's to our generous audiences, friends, staff, volunteers and the Management Team. You've been with us all the way.

*Women dancing everywhere
Or quietly sitting in a chair
Drinking in the life that's ours
Life that's full of stars and flowers
But for all of us, it's not quite true
For some it's true that life's quite blue
So, let's embrace our gorgeous selves
And leave a thought for those busy elves*

Merry Christmas to each and everyone of you from each and everyone of us.

Rita Tratt

Letters

Dear Ann Marie Kestle

Your poem spoke of love and the eternal cycle of life, and I am drawn to the unspoken aspects of your story. Poetry or prose draws me like beautiful music.

Glenys Buselli

Congratulations, Sonia

It is with great pleasure that I can let you know that Sonia Laverty was awarded an Edna Ryan Award at a glittering gala event at the Trades Hall on Friday 9 November 2012. Sonia's Workforce Award was for Improving Conditions for Women Workers. The EDNAS are awards for women who have made a feminist difference, i.e. whose activity advances the status of women: the battlers and the unsung heroines who show commitment and determination.

Apart from receiving her Edna Award, Sonia had another connection with Edna Ryan: she chaired the management committee of the Women's Trade Union Commission when Sonia was a project officer there. Like

A WORKFORCE AWARD

Sonia Laverty has long been an innovator and activist and has significantly improved the conditions of working women in many ways:

- As Secretary, she facilitated the registration of the newly formed NSW Social Welfare Workers' Union in 1978 - the first new union registration in 25 years.
- As Women's Trade Union Commission Project Officer in the 1980s, she set up a Register of Women in non-traditional jobs.
- She successfully secured a national Award variation for clothing outworkers in the Clothing and Allied Trades Union, ensuring they were given the same status as factory workers.

She is now involved in the Older Women's Network NSW where she has co-ordinated an evidence-based and politically astute campaign on the rights of older women. She has put age and gender right back on the agenda. At a recent forum in NSW Parliament, the Minister and Commissioner quoted Sonia-inspired statements. Active and smart - great politics, great woman!

Edna, Sonia continues to work toward making the world a better place for women of all ages. We are honoured to have her working for the Older Women's Network.

Judith Daley

From Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC, Governor-General

The Theatre Group was thrilled to receive the following message from the Governor General. It was personalized and heartfelt, and it gives us great heart to continue with our message.

“Thank you for your letter of 22nd October, enclosing a copy of the Older Women’s Network DVD ‘Don’t Knock your Granny’.

As Patron of the Older Women’s Network, I congratulate you on the strident messages put forward in the DVD.

There are lessons for all of us, no matter how old, to keep eyes, ears and hearts open to possible abuse, to learn about help for carers, about Aged Care Packages for those at home, and above all to remember the word “respect”.

Thank you for sending me a copy, and I send you all my very best wishes.”

*The Older Women’s Network
Theatre Group*



There can be Good Endings to Sad Stories

Further to a story Tribute to Mums “One of Life’s Hardest Decisions” June, 2011, I would like to let our members know that some of the sad stories during the Forced Adoptions era can have happy endings.

The baby I adopted out in 1962 (and didn’t know the sex of) I met in 1992. He had his adoptive parents alive and they did not assist or approve of him looking for his biological mother.

In 2006, I and my son from my marriage, went to Sydney and spent a few days with my son and his lovely wife from a second marriage.

We seemed to really gel and since then he has lost his parents who never knew he had found his biological mother.

When us women who had to surrender our babies for various reasons were no threat to adoptive parents we only need to know the sex



© Mylène Bressan

of our children and if they have had a good life and are happy.

I had my 70th birthday this year and for the first time my adoptive son surprised me and attended my birthday – of course I hadn’t spent any birthdays with him and vice versa.

My son from Darwin came as did a beautiful girl who came to live with me at 11 for a few years and I speak of her and her lovely husband and children as “my family” so my 70th birthday was very special.

*Pam Kenyon
Hastings OWN*





Aboriginal Support Circle Issues

Do Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Policies Work?

As a result of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody 20 years ago, most major government departments have Indigenous recruitment and retention policies.

These endeavour to bring the Indigenous component of their workforce to a rate comparable with the general Australian population - called "Indigenous Identified Positions." While there has been a large influx of Indigenous employees since then, for the majority of organisations, more attention is paid to recruiting rather than retaining Indigenous staff.

There seems to be a fear that if the Indigenous staff member is given an opportunity to advance to the next level of his/her career it will be seen as favouritism. This leads to a "white ceiling" on top of a "glass ceiling." It seems that the majority of Indigenous

workers languish at lower levels due to a lack of opportunity, not a lack of talent.

For many Indigenous people, there's a lack of understanding of the organisational culture. What are needed are solid policies and efforts to not only retain Indigenous staff, but also to show them how to apply for higher duties, career development opportunities and mentoring.

Indigenous talent management and career development is paramount to retaining Aboriginal staff.

Pat Zinn

.....
**Vale Isabel Coe
1951 - 2012**

Wiradjuri woman Isabel Coe, one of Australia's most prominent Indigenous leaders, died in her home town, Cowra, on Saturday, 10th November. She spent her life campaigning for Indigenous rights. In the 1960's, she was among young, well-educated Aboriginal people who turned

up in Sydney, where she met Michael Anderson, one of the founders of the Tent Embassy.

Dedicated to sovereignty, she played a lead role in the Embassy and kept it going, especially in the 1990's, in spite of government efforts to remove it. She said "we never relinquished sovereignty to our country and that's what this Tent Embassy is all about and that's why they want to remove us."

She called for a boycott of the Sydney Olympics and set up the Tent Embassy in Victoria Park during that time, where our Aboriginal Support Circle visited several times, bringing provisions. We shall remember her with great respect and send condolences to her family.

.....
Native Title rights stripped

The Cooper Basin in South Australia has some of Australia's largest on-shore oil deposits and is an area that is claimed by several Aboriginal groups under Native Title.



Review of Strata and Community Scheme Laws in NSW

However, the State Government has introduced legislation that will remove the need for companies to negotiate with Native Title holders. It has not gone through proper process, has left the Aboriginal people out of that process and has granted licences to three petroleum companies, Santos, Origin Energy Resources and Delhi Petroleum.

When South Australia was established, Letters Patents entrenched Aboriginal Land and Water Rights in 1836 and the Federal Native Title Act gives claimants the opportunity to negotiate with companies that want to use their land. This latest legislation gives certainty to the petroleum industry but wipes out the ability of Aboriginal groups to negotiate any sort of economic outcome for themselves. It is legislation undermines democratic process and sets a dangerous precedent. *Pat Zinn*

The NSW Government is currently reviewing the legislation applying to strata and community scheme apartments and developments.

The review is being undertaken by the Department of Fair Trading. The stated aim is to ensure that the laws are operating effectively and efficiently. People can make submissions or comments. The closing date was 22 November. However people can still send a submission in after the closing date

A key issue is what happens if an older apartment block is in need of major renovations or repairs and the current owners cannot afford to undertake the work. In many cases one option is to sell to a developer to enable the building to be redeveloped.

Under the current system, all owners have to agree to the sale and the effective cessation of the strata over the building. This can prevent the redevelopment, or put most owners hostage to

those who do not want to leave. It has been suggested that the laws be changed. It has been proposed that it needs only about 75 per cent of the owners to make it easier for any proposed redevelopment.

Issues include the fact that older (retired) residents are most at risk from this proposal. There could be harassment of owners to get them to agree to the changes. Of concern is whether the owner would receive a sale price which would enable them to stay within the local community. Could they afford to buy in the area?

The review closes on 22 November. However you should still be able to put a submission in or make comments. For more information go to the website for the Department of Fair Trading: www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au. Send your comments to:
*Review of Strata and Community Title Laws
Fair Trading Policy
PO box 972
Parramatta NSW 2124*

Margaret Kearney



The airport has become a testing ground of skills for women - from WAAAF work to building character

A WAAAF Recollection

The formation of the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force WAAAF only occurred after opposition from senior bureaucrats and members of the RAAF. When at last they were faced with the need to recruit females to enable release of airmen for forward postings some limited musterings were offered. Wing Commander Swinbourne, then Director of Organisation wrote, "From a survey of the directions in which women would be most useful to us, it is clear that these lie mostly in kitchen work".

As the war intensified it became clear that the recruitment of women to release men for forward areas had to be accelerated and further musterings were opened. I joined the WAAAF as a stores clerk in May 1942. When applications for technical musterings were called I promptly applied and joined the first intake in May 1943. We did our basic training at No 3 School of Technical Training, Ultimo, Sydney. It was previously the Sydney Technical College. We were accommodated at the Oceanic Hotel, Coogee. We slept on palliasses and there were stretchers with grey blankets and no sheets so it was far from luxurious.

Three months of basic training covered fitting and the use of tools such as calipers, micrometers, files, hammers, hacksaws, drills and electricity. Many other subjects were taught - how vague it all seems now! After completing the basic course we were posted to 1 Engineer School, Ascot Vale, in my case to train as a flight rigger.

Airmen were included in the course and we were taught the principles of hydraulics, aircraft



An Australian wartime poster calling woman to work

flap systems, fire extinguishers, crack detection, riveting, metallurgy, etc. After six months we graduated and my mate Daphne and I were posted to 8 EFTS Narrandera in November 1943.

As we were the first female flight riggers to work in the hangers we created a sensation and felt a little nervous. However we soon settled in and were fortunate in being appointed to a team led by two very decent corporals. They were wonderful mentors and became like father figures to us.

Minor overhauls were carried out after 40 flying hours and major overhauls after 240 hours. The accepted practice was for one of the team to participate in the test flight after each major overhaul but WAAAF were denied this as it was deemed too dangerous. Matters came to a head when we were required to swing the prop (Tiger Moths) which was done on the tarmac by ground crew. When my turn came I told the Sergeant that it seemed unfair for us to have to swing the prop as it was just as dangerous as going on a test flight. My mate agreed and we both waited to be charged with insubordination but nothing happened for some time.

Then one day out of the blue we were instructed to report to the hangar housing an Avro Anson and to bring a parachute. Since we didn't know how to use a parachute it seemed a useless exercise. The CO arrived and said, "Get in" and we took off. He then proceeded to circle Narrandera doing slow rolls and I became very airsick, but my mate was OK. No doubt it was a hot topic in the Officers' Mess that night - the CO's sweet revenge.

As the war drew to a conclusion, I worked in the Discharge Section until my discharge in Feb 1946. There were many highlights and some lows but that's another story. One of the great rewards was the camaraderie and mateship that continued after the war.

Joy Wheatley (nee Bowman)



Airports a learning experience

Airports serve various needs that you don't even know you need. A visit can develop:

Patience: Waiting is apparently is good for your character and, as you do lots of it in an airport, developing patience is part of the process.

Fitness: The authorities have designed airports that require you to go from one end to another. This helps you develop Patience and fitness. They ensure that the passages/ corridors are extremely long, thus giving the passenger ample time to develop their skills.

Cognitive skills: They ensure that you have to read and follow instructions and/ or directions. Often, meanings are obscure or confusing.



Herding skills: Some airports herd all their customers into a holding area and place electronic notice boards, which you have to watch for the correct information and then scramble on cue.

Unpacking skills: Security pounce on the unsuspecting traveller and demand the hand luggage is unpacked.

Humility: Associated with unpacking skills as your things are unpacked for all to see. Then you are faced with the task of re-packing your bag hurriedly, aware you are holding up other unsuspecting victims.

And you thought airports were just places where you catch a plane! Why else are we expected to be at the airport two hours before take-off?

Anne-Marie Kestle



Pitching their tent at the same site in Jervis Bay for thirty years has brought many happy memories to one group of committed campers

For the past thirty years, members of my family have gone camping at Jervis Bay on the New South Wales south coast with the same group of people. We have gone twice a year for one weekend in spring and one weekend in autumn to a place called Bristol Point in the Booderee National Park which, it is said, has the whitest sand in the world.

Originally there were about eight families who went on a regular basis, with different friends and neighbours joining in at various times. We have always booked a large campsite for a very reasonable price, so were somewhat taken aback when we arrived last weekend to be told that arrangements would alter next year. Costs would go up and the large sites would be divided into much smaller sites.

What a change! We pondered the other changes which have occurred during our thirty years of camping. At our first camps we were all working so arrived at Bristol Point late on Friday night and left on Sunday afternoon. Now we are nearly all retired, we arrive on Friday morning and leave on Monday.



First, we brought our children with us, now it is the grandchildren or even, in some cases, the great grandchildren. In the early days we would bring birdseed so the children could feed the birds and old bread for the kangaroos and possums. Now we have seen the light and leave the fauna to feed themselves. Yet, many things have remained the same. The dolphins always appear at some time during the weekend and the white-bellied sea eagles still soar overhead.

The water is still amazingly clear. The children are always drawn to the fire (under strict supervision) to cook toast and to toast marshmallows.

New chums, erecting their tents for the first time are still subject to much teasing banter, much unsolicited advice and much very practical help. This weekend,

four very disconsolate students arrived on our doormats on Saturday evening with a sad story to tell. They had arrived at the park confident that there would be no trouble finding a site for their tent only to be told that the campsites were fully booked.

Seeing that we enjoyed a large site they asked if they could pitch their tent in a quiet corner as it was late and they had exhausted all other possibilities.

The boys were all from China, two studying at Wollongong University and the other two from Sydney. Their tent was brand new and it seemed that they had never been camping before. Initially, we all averted our eyes from their doomed attempts to put up their tent.

Finally it all became too much and out came the teasing banter, the unsolicited advice and the practical help. We enjoyed their company for one night, then, as promised, they were off to new adventures.

Who could put a price on the wonderful experiences Bristol Point has brought us.?

Peggy Rodden



When the heritage despots take over, planning applications can become a battle of wills and interpretation

I paid Leichhardt Council \$780.00 for a pre-Development Application meeting and got a very long written response to my plans. Let me tell you about some of the objections.

They say “No Off Street Parking” even though I currently have a driveway. The reason given? “They don’t like the look of cars parked in front of houses.” There are cars parked in front of houses all around Leichhardt, including the most recent set of terraces, just around the corner. What is different about my place?

They had said they don’t want houses built within 500 metres of a railway corridor (the light rail) even though half of Leichhardt is. Now they’ll allow it, if I use acoustic tiles. Big of them!

They insist that my houses have the same presentation from the street as other houses. Which other houses? The houses in my street were built between about 1910 and 1990. Of 20 houses, six are in the style the council insists I build. My plan for attic second storey would be allowed, provided it doesn’t appear as that from the street!

But there is one objection that really got me. They will not allow the demolition of a small freestanding cottage. Those who have seen where I live know it is a shed that grew, built of fibro between 1950 and 1990. Now they say that they want to preserve past commercial sites in Leichhardt.

The Council says that there were buildings on my land around 1880, because water was connected. And this is the killer. Properties in this part of the municipality had direct access to what is now



Getting around planning restrictions takes initiative

Hawthorn Canal, which facilitated a diverse range of land uses in the neighbourhood, for example, bone boilers and tripe dressers. It could also be feasible that the area was occupied, in part, by fishermen. They don’t say there were any of these on my block, and there is no sign of any building from 1880. The heritage despots are at work...

The architect and I have negotiated a plan that will address some of the council issues. I won’t have a building that appears modern from the street nor one that shows I have built into the roof. I have to move my houses much further forward so that no one can later sneak in off-street parking. The building will have acoustic tiles. A structural engineer will be writing a report about the derelict state of this building. The new DA goes in soon. But what do I do if the heritage despots insist on preserving something that isn’t here, because it’s in the area where there were “bone-boilers” and “tripe-dressers”?

I’m considering doing something the council wouldn’t like – removing the fibro, replacing it with tin, and painting it in feminist colours. A tin shed in purple, green and white stripes would certainly attract attention.

Lorraine Inglis



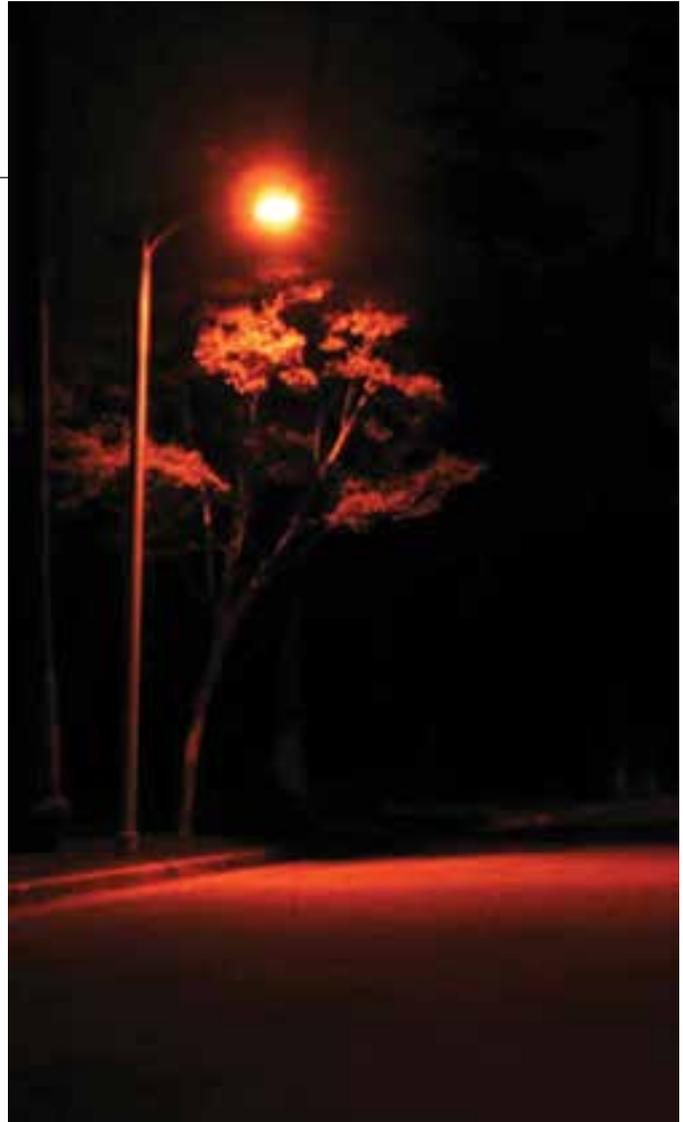
A random sighting of a lonely walker brings Sleepless in Brisbane a moment of soul searching

It's 2 a.m. and light from neon signs atop a high-rise office block across the street filters through curtains at the windows of our 11th storey room in a slick, downtown Brisbane hotel. The sharp lines of the hotel furniture are just discernible, under a scattering of possessions left carelessly earlier in the evening when my Devoted Spouse and I had headed for bed, fatigued from a long and full day of sightseeing and socialising.

DS now sleeps soundly, but I am restless. Rising cautiously from the vast, hard bed and unyielding pillow, I step gently over the sweep of carpet and gaze through the window at the almost silent city. A large office block nearby blazes with internal light, but not a soul moves along its long tiled halls or in its serried ranks of offices. In the distance, the lights of South Brisbane twinkle. Below, except for taxis gliding between sets of traffic lights, pausing and driving off again, and an occasional pedestrian hurrying away, rendered minute by distance, the city is devoid of life.

The silence of the night holds me, allowing welcome quietness of mind. Absently, I notice a solitary individual weaving his unsteady way across the street far below. I watch him, wondering if he will reach the other side.

Once there, he disappears into the shadows of a cluster of trees. I wait, interested to see if he will reappear and he does, staggering out of the darkness uncertainly and clumsily back the way he had come. I muse about him – is he struggling with some painful life crisis? Is he just a lonely man, lost and without purpose? Does anyone care about him?



An unsteady walker disappears into the shadows

I will never know the answers to these questions, but I know I shall recall with empathic clarity his embodiment of our moments of lostness, our ongoing search for direction in life and our ultimate passing away.

For are we not all at times lost, uncertain and in search of a way forward? And shall we not all vanish when our time comes? My thoughts begin to wander and merge randomly, beyond capture. I return to bed, grateful for the calming embrace of night. Sleep comes quickly.

Bev Cameron



When a loved one passes away, what happens to their beloved pet? Should our loyal companions be given the same rights of inheritance as us?



Photo © Dan Kirkwood

Many older people are healthier because they have a dog. They have a pet to care for, take for walks and talk to. The dog keeps them company and gives them a greater sense of security. But if they die, what happens to the dog? There isn't always a member of the family who wants to adopt it. Should dogs have rights of inheritance when they have been, in effect, their owner's family and companion?

Many independent living units for older people do not allow pets, and are therefore not purchased by people who have a pet to keep them company. Some older people have been very concerned about their pet as they become frailer. They want to feel confident about their pet's future. Understandable, when their dog or cat may have been their lifeline and final companion.

I was discussing this with two women who have left money in their will, for their pet to be cared for. I guess you appoint an executor to arrange the care of your pet.

In a Florida Law Review article, *Should Pets Inherit?* we read,

27% have already included their pet in their wills or intend to do so.

Of those people,

35% plan to leave their pets more than £10,000 in their wills, with some

37% admitting they intend to leave more to their companion animal than to a close relative or family friend.

Survey by More Than Pet Insurance UK

"American inheritance law is trapped in an outdated family paradigm. For many Americans today their pets, not their human family members, are their nearest and dearest."

A survey of 14,181 pet owners by More Than Pet Insurance, UK, discovered that 27 percent have already included their pet in their wills or intend to do so. Of those people, 35 percent plan to leave their pets more than £10,000 (\$15,000) in their wills, with some 37 percent admitting they intend to leave more to their companion animal than to a close relative or family friend.

When considering their pet's future, More Than's survey found that 70 percent of owners made arrangements with family, friends and neighbours, while 19 percent intend to make provision in their will for a full time pet sitter,

I doubt that it is possible to just leave money to a pet, unless it is talented enough to operate a bank account. If I was leaving money for a pet to be cared for, I would make sure that a weekly amount be paid to someone trustworthy, for as long as the pet is alive, and shown to be alive.

Ten years maximum would see probably it out, unless the pet was an elephant.

That way the carer wouldn't be tempted to pop off the pooch and pocket the cash.

Lorraine Inglis



SYDNEY WATER ASSISTANCE

Sydney Water have recently expanded their assistance program and provided very significant improvements for persons who are suffering financial hardship.

There is now a structured process regarding water bills, with a wide range of assistance available from the 'Bill Assist Program', the 'Customer Service Team' and the 'Debt Recovery Team' as well as the 'Payments Assistance program'.

To qualify, a person has to be assessed and there is a checklist and an FAQ list. For example: Plumbing Assistance Program is only available for essential or urgent repairs for vulnerable and disadvantaged clients. An example was given of a man on a disability pension without hot water for eight months because he was too afraid of the cost.

These services only apply to the Sydney Water catchment area, which is the metropolitan area up to Wollongong, Blackheath and the Hawkesbury. Regional water is managed by the respective local Councils and many do not provide any assistance. For information, contact Sydney Water on 13 20 92 or www.sydneywater.com.au

Judith Daley

Lack of empathy on police tasing and child sexual assaults brings little comfort to the population

I've been watching the recent furore on our screens over two different issues. Did you see NSW Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione's reaction to the Court's response to the tasing death of Roberto Laudisio Curti, and the call for an enquiry into the Police use of tasers?

He appeared to be merely mildly conciliatory and diffident at best. But when he was further questioned by a reporter about the footage seen the night before on ABC 7:30 Report on the terrible tasing of a 14 year old Aboriginal boy, Scipione's response was shocking and sickening.

It appeared that he didn't even feel that that was a crime, as if the poor child wasn't even human and didn't deserve any compassion. I had cried the night before when I saw the footage and seeing Scipione reacted made me want to throw up. Then did you see how George Pell responded to the announcement of the proposed Royal Commission into child sexual assault & paedophilia?

He didn't appear to agree that such terrifying and abhorrent

behaviour in the Roman Catholic church in Australia should be thoroughly investigated and not only should victims be treated with respect, justice and compensation but also both the perpetrators and all those who were their accomplices would be dealt with the full force of the Law.

Instead he's in denial and was totally insensitive and lacking in judgement, refusing to recognise his own role in the process. In particular his attitude so reminiscent of the "but Mum/Miss he started it" was such an incredibly childish way to behave. Watching him it feels like behind his eyes he is empty or absent. I can't fathom whether he really doesn't get the full horror of such abuse or thinks it's only an issue if the perpetrators are caught. Under the circumstances I can't help but feel that he has misunderstood Jesus' statement "suffer little children to come unto me".

This is a living nightmare. Both these men representing the church and state in Australia today reflect the continuing need for us to be vigilant and to fight against such vile injustice. I for one, find it hard to sleep.

Uma Kali Shakti



Tributes

Nina Walton 1926-2012

Nina joined Sydney OWN in the early 90's after she attended a workshop run by the late Louise Anike at a National Women Conference in Canberra. She soon joined the OWN Theatre Group, which sometimes travelled to country towns where members were often billeted with local women, and remained with it until 1997.

As a conscientious member of OWN for many years she carried out the duties of keeping the office supplied with tea, coffee and other groceries.

Nina was also an original member in 2000 of what is now the Birkenhead coffee group where she was much loved. Nina and I started a self-help group for OWN members who might have issues about anxiety, as we had experience running a Depression and Anxiety group once a month for the Mental Health Association.

We ran this group for 10 years and I enjoyed working with her. Nina also worked part-time at a mental health hospital and was highly regarded and much appreciated by patients and staff for her warmth and compassion.



Two days before she died we took her beloved cat, Rosa, to see her at the facility where she had been for 4 years. Rosa lay on the bed and we believe they really had 'communion'.

Nina had had a long association with the Independent Theatre at North Sydney in both acting and direction and this was where her funeral was held. Her coffin was placed on the stage and was beautifully decorated with mauve paper covered with enlarged writings in a slightly darker shade from Nina's Journal.

There was no religious service but many tributes from family and friends. Nina is survived by her daughter and three sons.

Jan Monson



Notices

Feminist Activity

F Collective: Established several years ago, 'f' has organised numerous events, including Sydney IWD, a national conference for feminists and successful protests at anti-choice meetings. 'f' meet regularly and can be contacted by email at: thefcollective@gmail.com



Sydney Sisterhood: This network was started because there are often great women's/feminist events taking place but it can be hard to get the word out! Sydney Sisterhood aims to provide a central place from which to distribute and receive notices about events, protests, and any other essential organising information for the feminist movement in Sydney. Contact Sydney Sisterhood on Facebook.



The Sydney Feminists: This group is becoming known for public screenings of documentaries with the intention of engaging the public to think about the ways in which media and culture affect behaviour and gender identity. The Sydney Feminists network with other feminist groups. They can be contacted by email at: contact@sydneyfeminists.org



Notices

Women's Abortion Action

Campaign (WAAC): We are online at www.waac.org.au. Or—you can visit us on Facebook at Waac NSW. For details, email WAAC at contact_waac@yahoo.com.au

Women Say Something: This not for profit event is held three or four times a year and brings together diverse women to share their stories and struggles within all our communities and discuss issues ranging from feminism, family, pop culture, politics and beyond in venues around Sydney CBD. Contact Women Say Something on Facebook.

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Information kit for CALD carers

An information kit for CALD carers has been developed by Hunter New England Health Local Health District. It provides a diversity of carer related information in seven community languages relevant to small and emerging community groups in the Hunter Region. Translated information resources in Arabic, Chinese, Filipino, Hindi, Korean, Thai and Vietnamese, as well as English, have been collated

under the following topics: **Carer Support Services, Disability, Housing, Independent Living, Legal Issues, Mental Health, Money Matters, Respite, Rights & Responsibilities, and Social / Leisure Activities.**

The kit includes a spreadsheet which identifies the agency or department providing the resource, the resource title, and a web link to the information source. This should ensure access to current and timely information should the translated document provided be updated.

The translated information in the kit is intended as a resource for health, education and community workers, and may be viewed or printed and given to CALD carers and/or family members. It is envisaged the worker would provide guidance and clarification to ensure any information given was understood and used appropriately. The kit is available as a CD Rom or data stick.

To order, contact Educare Carer Support Service on (02) 4921 4895 or 1300 887776 or email Educare-admin@hnehealth.nsw.gov.au. Culturally & Linguistically Specific Information: After Hours GP Helpline.

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Kathryn Greiner AO appointed Chair of Ministerial Advisory Committee on Ageing

NSW Minister for Ageing Andrew Constance has today announced the appointment of Mrs Kathryn Greiner AO as Chair of the NSW Ministerial Advisory Committee on Ageing (MACA).

“I am excited to welcome Kathryn Greiner to the role, to lead the MACA to deliver a new approach to harnessing the opportunities presented by population ageing,” Mr Constance said. Mrs Greiner has a diverse background starting in social work and extending to experience in business and local government.

“Kathryn comes to the MACA full of ideas and enthusiasm and I look forward to working with her and the MACA to support NSW in leading the way in embracing the opportunities ahead.” Over the course of her career Mrs Greiner has been actively involved in a number of not-for-profit organisations such as the Salvation Army, and has held directorships for the

Financial Planning Association, John Singleton Advertising, a former Councillor on the City of Sydney, and Deputy Chancellor of Bond University. MACA provides advice to the NSW Government through the Minister for Ageing on the impact of population ageing on government and the community.

“Its purpose is to support the NSW Government in achieving healthy and productive ageing for the people of NSW, consistent with the NSW whole of government Ageing Strategy.”

The MACA has 13 members, appointed as individuals, based on their expertise and experience, and meets up to six times a year in Sydney. For more information: www.maca.nsw.gov.au

Lost Ladies

Hi all,
Please let me know if you are not returning. I like to keep the first day back at Windmill St for definite enrolment figures and to make a list of people's absences. OWN has to use these premises as much as possible so that we have a chance of avoiding sale by the NSW govt. Having a meeting at base allows us to get to know each other socially as well as interacting round the table and sharing ideas.

Leave December 12 free for a Christmas Party we can discuss at Windmill St on first day back.

Annette Butterfield 96655369
abutterfield_852@hotmail.com

MEMBERS AND FRIENDS WELCOME TO ATTEND ALL ACTIVITIES

Wellness on Wednesdays

9.30am-12.30pm every WED until DEC 12. Resumes JAN 23. Abraham Mott Hall, Argyle Street, Millers Point. Contact Lola 9665 8741 or Joy 9698 5205

Lost Ladies

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

Film Discussion Group

You are invited on TUES DEC 11 to see Skyfall. Recommended for viewing is Robot and Frank. Tues 8 Jan – film to be decided. Contact Yetty on 9665 2050 for more information.

Bondi Junction Coffee and Gossip Group

11am - last Friday in each month. Special Summer Solstice Party on DEC 21. The Coffee Shop, Eastern Suburbs Leagues Club (enter from 93-98 Spring St. You must sign in.) Contact Yetty 9665 2050 to check all details.

Book Club

MON DEC 10 - 12.30pm at 87 Lower Fort St. *All That I Am* by Anna Funder (Come at 12 with a sandwich for lunch.)
MON JAN 21 - 12.30pm at 87 Lower Fort St. *Water for Elephants* by Sara Gruen. (Come at 12 with a sandwich for lunch.)

Aboriginal Support Circle

Last meeting for 2012 is on MON DEC 3. Confirm details for 2013 with Pat Zinn 9389 1090 or email patzinn@hotmail.com

Saturday Social Group at Birkenhead Point

Our Christmas lunch is at 12 noon, DEC 8 at Birkenhead Café, 1st floor Birkenhead Shopping Complex. Contact Bev Cameron on 9957 5367 or Meg Venning on 9887 2386.

Subscribe Now to OWN MATTERS

- Subscription to OWN MATTERS is just \$25 per year, due every July 1.
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- I enclose a chq/money order for \$25 - covers to June 30, 2012 made payable to OWNNNSW
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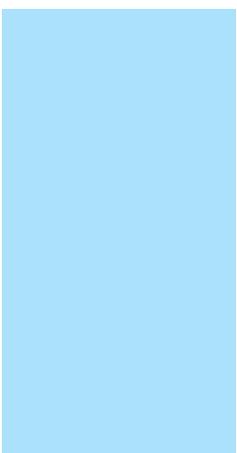
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