



OWN MATTERS

Newsletter of the Older Women's Network NSW

Vol.8 No.8 – September 2011



Bags of Change needed for Anti-Poverty Week!

For **Anti-Poverty Week** we are launching a fund-raising initiative called **Bags of Change**, to raise money for **Rosalie House**, which is a refuge for older women...

see [OWN NSW Quarterly](#) page 3 & [Bags of Change](#) page 7



Illawarra says 'No' to CSG

Earlier in the year I had viewed a home video DVD filmed in the US called *Gaslands*, and once I had heard that 15 applications for exploration had been approved up on the escarpment, I knew something had to happen...

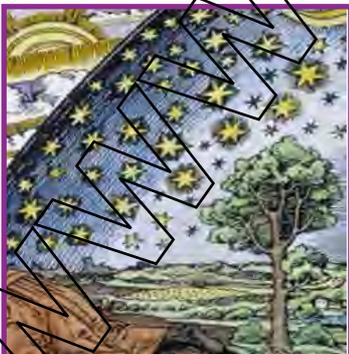
see [Community Action](#) page 10



One Woman's Journey

After we landed, we travelled to Mascot, which changed our impression of Australia. Looking at the fibro and timber houses and tin roofs we thought we had made a mistake in coming to this country. Most people dressed very casually and wore thongs....

see [Connie's Story](#) page 18



The Challenges of Ageing

...other issues of ageing confront me regularly. The first is my energy, once abundant and easily renewed, which now needs to be spent thoughtfully... Emotional resilience is the other issue of ageing to face...

see [Crossing the Rubicon](#) page 22

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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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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@ownsw.org.au

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Disclaimer : *The views expressed in OWN Matters are not necessarily those of the Older Women's Network NSW, and we do not guarantee the accuracy of the facts in articles supplied by members. The Older Women's Network NSW accepts no responsibility for any loss occasioned to any person acting, or not acting, upon any material in OWN Matters.*

Despite our best efforts, OWN NSW has been notified that we still have some inclusions to make to our new constitution in order to meet all the requirements of the Model Constitution before registering it with the Department of Fair Trading.

In order to do this, we are obliged to take this draft constitution to another Special General meeting, now scheduled for 14 October, 2011, where the following motion will be put to delegates:

That the constitution of the Older Women's Network NSW Inc, as tabled on 14 October 2011, be adopted.

Copies of the proposed changes, detailed in a copy of the OWN NSW Draft Constitution dated 14 October 2011, have been sent to all member groups, along with notice of the resolution, and an invitation to attend the Special General Meeting. Please ensure you appoint a delegate to attend this important meeting.

To ease the pain of all this as much as possible, and even have fun, we have come up with the idea to hold the Special General Meeting, followed by the final Quarterly Meeting for the year. This date is significant as it heralds the start of **Anti-Poverty Week** and we plan to mark this with our own event – **Bags of Change** – drawing attention to the feminization of poverty.

For any queries on the proposed changes to the constitution please contact me on ph. 9591 3137 or email: sonialaverty@optusnet.com.au

Sonia Laverty for the Management Team

Special General Meeting

A Special General Meeting will be held at
10.30 am, Friday

14 October,
at Customs House Library
in the meeting Room,
Circular Quay.

We are asking all OWN
groups to send a delegate to
vote on the following motion:

"That the constitution of the Older Womens' Network NSW Inc. as tabled on 14 October 2011, be adopted."

Notices and documents have been sent to all
OWN NSW Member Groups. RSVP: 9247 7046
or: info@ownsw.org.au by 7 October.



October OWN Quarterly

The last OWN NSW quarterly of 2011 will be held on October 14 at Customs House, Circular Quay, following the **Special General Meeting**.

Bobby Townsend, who was a consultant for our report, ***It Could Be You***, will be speaking about the need for affordable housing for older women.

The theme for this OWN NSW Quarterly is: **Bags of Change**, and this is a fund-raiser for **Rosalie House**, as part of **Anti-Poverty Week, 2011**. You can read all about it on page 7 of this issue of *OWN Matters*.

We are also holding a contest for the Bag with Personality. So the bag you carry on that day could be: old, new, ugly, pretty, quirky, weird, or wonderful, just a bag with personality. **Please be there by 10.30 for SGM.**

I hope we will see lots of you on October 14.

Lorraine Inglis



IMPORTANT AGM Notice

The date for the OWN Sydney AGM has changed. It is now on **Wednesday 5 October**. Mott Hall, Millers Point; 12.30 meeting, you'll be glad to know we're still doing lunch!

If you are coming, RSVP to Judith Daley :
9181 3249 or at [jadrc13@bigpond.com](mailto:jadrjc13@bigpond.com)
by September 28.

One of our jobs at the AGM is to elect the committee. Please think about stepping up to this role for 12 months. It's challenging and can be lots of fun.

Confronting Ageism

Reflections on Age Discrimination by Elizabeth Broderick

My path to promote age equality has been both sobering and uplifting. Sobering to expose what I have often referred to as “invisible” discrimination in our society – a discrimination so widely and unconsciously accepted that we are often completely unaware that our actions support it – a discrimination so universally part of our modern culture, that we often accept it without question and uplifting because there is so much momentum for change. For the first time – as from July – we have a full-time Age Discrimination Commissioner, Susan Ryan. This means that, like other areas of discrimination – sex, race, disability and Indigenous, age discrimination will finally have a commissioner devoted full-time to their advocacy, together with accompanying resources and full-time staff.

I doubt that I will ever forget the first ‘light bulb’ moment I had when the realities of age discrimination really started to hit home. It was at one of my first briefings after taking up my position at the Australian Human Rights Commission. I was sitting there, concentrating studiously, as you do in a new job – when the presenter started talking about who exactly, a mature age worker was. “Mature-age workers are workers aged 45 years and older,” she stated, as she pragmatically moved on to her next point. Meanwhile, as her comment started to penetrate my veneer of perfectly poised studiousness, I began having one of those silent, jaw – dropping “WHAAATTT!?! – moments that you see in comedies. “That can’t be right.” I was thinking, as I sensed the cold fingers of shock rushing down my spine. “That’s ME! – I’m A MATURE AGE WORKER?!?! – BUT I’M ONLY 47!”

Which was when I realised that this was a great untold story about ageism and age discrimination in our country. That, once you turn 45, in employment terms you are considered by many in the employment market to be over the hill. And the further ‘over that hill’ you get the more unemployable you are likely to become. Not because you are unskilled but simply because the prevailing community attitude and dominant set of stereotypes have moved to now consider you to be ‘old’ and with this, saddled with a host of false and destructive assumptions.

The thing that really got me was the issue of age discrimination was not someone else’s – someone older’s – issue anymore. Here I was – at 47 – a mature age worker, where the issue was squarely my issue. We also desperately need research. The dire lack of research in this area is a reflection of the extent to which age discrimination is way behind the eight-ball, compared with other areas of discrimination is for which proper and comprehensive research bases exist.

To the human-right’s sector, of which I am indisputably a part, I say age discrimination is all our business. To fight one form of discrimination is, to fight them all. Many forms of discrimination may involve older people. We have older women; we have older people with disabilities; we have Indigenous elders; we have older people who are culturally and linguistically diverse and we have older people of different sexualities. We need to understand the diversity of older people and act on the multiple forms of discrimination they may experience.

Led by the voices of older people, this is the foundation needed for a community that is truly inclusive – a community where, when we speak about human rights, age equality is front and centre.

[http:// www.hreoc.gov.au/about media/speeches/age2011/20110621_age_discrimination](http://www.hreoc.gov.au/about_media/speeches/age2011/20110621_age_discrimination)

Ageism

Gendered Ageism was the topic of a workshop at the OWN NSW conference on 28 July, led by Sonia Laverty and Penny Nelson. Ageist stereotypes that older people are useless, past it or dependent can be even sharper when sexism is added to the mix, depicting older women as passive, asexual, and unhealthy.

Sonia’s Ph.D. on ageism was inspired by the patronising treatment her mother received from health professionals. Penny summarised *The Elephant in the Room*, a report on age discrimination. Employers resort to euphemisms such as:

- Qualifications and experience not up to date.
- Would you be able to work with a young team?
- We want someone with a high energy level.
- We doubt whether you could learn the required new skills in the available time.

One biological scientist who gained a higher degree at 40 was told that researchers lose their zip at that age. She loved experimental science but was forced to make a career in a different field. In many workplaces, women are pressured to look young and attractive. One young male bank executive from head office looked round at the staff of one branch and said audibly, “All these fat, old women are making our business look untidy.”

Confronting Ageism

Invisibility

One participant said her walking frame had been a cloak of invisibility. Others commented that grey-haired customers wait for assistance while newly-arrived young people are served first.

Medical assumptions about age

“It’s only to be expected at your age.” This clichéd comment, frequently made by doctors, betrays a reluctance to explore alternative diagnoses. One doctor, mentioning a treatment with detrimental effects on a patient’s sex life, commented, “at your age, does it matter?”. We discussed being considered too old for expensive treatments, and having our own decisions ignored. Automatic reminders about BreastScreen tests stop at 70. We may approach the Cancer Council to suggest a policy review.

Assertiveness is the best defence

To challenge ageism in the workplace, it is necessary to be assertive, resourceful, confident and persistent. Self belief is fundamental. Tips for the older job seeker include:

- Take all dates off your CV – list qualifications, degrees, and major jobs without dates
- Using active verbs and short sentences, concentrate on skills relevant to the job applied for
- Don’t send more than 3 or 4 pages.
- Emphasise teamwork, flexibility/versatility, enthusiasm for new skills.
- Deal directly with companies rather than employment agencies or management consultants.
- Consider changing direction (e.g. into Event Management or teaching English as a second language).

Maintaining social networks of former OWN members

Age and mobility problems can prevent women who were once active members of OWN and similar organisations from keeping connected. A grant was obtained by OWN Sutherland Wellness Centre from Sutherland Shire Council which enables women to meet for lunch on Thursdays at a community restaurant. A worker is employed three hours a week and community transport is available. This program provides a model that could be used elsewhere. Valuing ageing is the key concept in this program.

Challenging Ageism

Sonia briefly reported on her plan for a forum on ageism in 2012 with the objective of getting ageism on the political agenda. With this in mind it would be useful if members held their own discussions and documented their experiences including any action they might have taken. Any outcomes from discussions could be useful in planning the forum. Sonia is available to assist any groups wanting to run a discussion on ageism. She can be contacted through OWN NSW office.

Penny Nelson

The Cost of Ageing

Of the ten OECD countries surveyed:

- Australia spends the lowest percentage of its GDP on providing government pensions (2.6%).
- Couples on government pensions in Australia are by far the worst off when their average incomes are measured against the incomes of non-pensioners. (Pension couples receive 13% of non-pensioner incomes.)

Research has found that many employers believe that older persons (even as young as 45) have a shorter working life and will therefore provide lower returns to the company. This assumption not only makes employers reluctant to employ older workers but also to retrain them.

Research in Europe, which appears to be several years ahead of Australia in tackling issues about ageing populations, indicates the benefits of retaining workers beyond the age of 45. Evidence shows older workers’ job performance is better than younger workers. Older people learn to do things better through years of experience of working. The British government has drawn up a code of practice to raise employer awareness of the benefits of employing older workers. Germany has introduced a gradual retirement scheme allowing Germans to work part-time leading up to retirement. A London researcher, Dr Phillip Taylor, warned employers about the long term social costs of discriminating against older workers, maintaining that if they are fit and able there is no reason why people cannot keep working at 75 or even 80.

Past and even current, superannuation has had serious shortcomings. One of these is the result of women’s employment patterns. Women have generally been the carers of society, raising families, homemaking and caring for elderly and disabled relatives and friends, and these duties do not generate an income or, therefore,

Confronting Ageism

superannuation. Up to the 1960s and 70s, even if they were working full-time, women were not generally offered superannuation. Now retired or retiring, they must rely on the pension or their husband's generosity.

Even today, the most usual work pattern for women is broken employment periods with some part-time employment. For these reasons, a large enough amount of superannuation to live on is much more likely to be accumulated by men than women. Single women are the group most likely to live in poverty in old age. They have not accumulated superannuation, they do not have a husband for support, and the low pension rates keep them close to or below the poverty line.

Excerpts from the Face of Aging – Impacts



Do You Remember...?

If you are as old as I am, or even younger, you may remember going into McIlwraiths, or even a grocery store. In McIlwraiths, men in white aprons glided up and down behind the counter getting a quarter pound of butter from a larger quantity, patting it into shape and then wrapping it. Mrs Brown could buy a small quantity of cheese, so many eggs and so on. Mrs Brown's purchases would be packed into her basket accompanied by a, "Thank you, Mrs Brown. See you next week."

When Mrs Brown arrived home there would probably be a twist of boiled lollies included in the shopping for the children.

How times have changed and, sadly, I do not think for the better. I feel some of the simpler things of life are being 'dehumanised' and I am not sure in the name of what, except in the name of profit.

The other day I went out to do my weekly shop at the nearest supermarket, which happens to be a Coles. I took my trolley (a small one which requires a dollar coin) and started my trundle around the aisles. No one around in a white apron and ready smile to help me. Try to find something that is just big enough for one. Oh no, not today! 'Buy-two-and-save-x number of cents'. Then just to make things a little more difficult, where I usually find a certain product, blow me down if it hasn't been moved.

Finally, having trudged my lonely way around the shelves, I head for the checkout. What do I find? There are robot checkouts waiting for me now to do the job of the 'checkout person'. Suddenly I am transformed into Eliza Dolittle and I look at these robots and snarl at them: "**Not bloody likely!**" So now the two major supermarkets want me to actually do the work of a cashier with no refund for being an unpaid worker!!!

This Eliza would rather stand in a queue and wait for an employed cashier to do the honours. Talking to people about what sneaky retailers have been conditioning their customers to do, I have heard some odd replies. In fact I was surprised, that a number of people think these robot cashiers are a way of getting out of the shop faster. "Er, excuse me, but did you give any thought to the fact that a number of employees have either lost their job or are on even less working hours so you can get out of the shop faster?"

What can we do about it? If your supermarket has gone robotic cashier and it is a Coles store then pick up one of their brochures asking for feedback about the store. It is in the form of an old-style letter card, you have to tear it open, one side asks for certain details and on the other you can write your comments. Just seal it with a bit of tape and send it off as it is postage paid. You can indicate if you wish to receive a reply.

I know times change but, I am not going to become an unpaid worker so that the supermarket can make even more profits at the expense of staff, especially women.

If you agree with me, grab one of the forms and let the supermarket know how you feel about **the dehumanising of shopping**. With enough women taking up the pen, we can prove the pen is mightier than the sword.

June Goss Wyong OWN

Bags of Change



Members of the Older Women's Network have fought for change, for themselves, and other older women. We know that many older women desperately need accommodation and support. Women's and children's refuges are just that: refuges for women with children. They have no room for older women who no longer have dependent children. **Change is needed, big change.** But we are asking you for *small* change.

Our next quarterly meeting will be held in Sydney, on 14 October, at Customs House opposite Circular Quay. For **Anti-Poverty Week** we are launching a fund-raising initiative called **Bags of Change**, to raise money for Rosalie House, which is a refuge for older women. The basic idea is to get your group to gather some old handbags, into which members collect up mountains of small change, notes are OK too!

It would be great if each OWN group could do this during September and October. The aim is to make the deposits directly into the Commonwealth Bank account of Rosalie House over the course of Anti-Poverty Week, identifying them as "**Bags of Change**". We will have registered this as our Anti-Poverty Week activity. The bank has many branches with automatic self-serve coin-counting machines, and they have agreed to assist us in our project - **Bags Of Change!** Just the thing for all that small change, and a bunch of old bags!

In August last year Rosalie House opened its doors to provide supported medium-term accommodation for women over 45 who are homeless and have left because of domestic

violence. It is owned by the Sydney Archdiocese of the St Vincent de Paul Society. The managers of women's and children's refuges of the Society put in a submission to Vinnies for it to be available for older women. They know how little support there is for women of this age who have left abusive relationships and are homeless. The house was fitted out and has six bedrooms with en suites. There is a large living area and communal kitchen, a separate bathroom and laundry, and an office for management and administration. Like all refuges, the address is not advertised.

Six women are living in Rosalie House, and can stay for two years. It is hoped that having a safe place will allow the women to become more independent, concentrate on gaining skills, and work towards being able to move into the community.

Lorraine Inglis



ANTI-POVERTY WEEK
16 - 22 October 2011

Join in Anti-Poverty Week 2011
16 - 22 October

Anti-Poverty Week focuses on poverty around the world, including Australia. Its main aims are to:

- strengthen public understanding of the causes and consequences of poverty and hardship;
- encourage research, discussion and action to address these problems.

Last year, at least 1,000 organisations and more than 10,000 people were involved around the country.

Everyone is welcome to organise activities or join in something being organised by other people.

The website:

www.antipovertyweek.org.au includes basic fact sheets, promotional material, a calendar of activities and links to other sources of info and ideas.

Contact us at 1300 797 290 or:

apw@antipovertyweek.org.au

Age and Experience

Being Green

In the line at the supermarket, the cashier reminded an older woman that she should bring her own shopping bags because plastic bags weren't good for the environment. The woman apologized to him and explained, "We didn't have the green thing back in my day." The check-out boy responded, "That's our problem today, your generation didn't think about the environment." He was right, our generation didn't really think too much about it. Back then, we returned our milk, soft drink and beer bottles to the shop. The shop sent them back to the factory to be washed and sterilised and refilled, so they could use the same bottles over and over. They were the ones who thought about recycling, because it made production cheaper. We just did our bit.

But we didn't have 'the green thing' back then. In our day, we walked up stairs, because we didn't have escalator in every shop and office building. We walked down the street to get the bread and milk if we ran out, and didn't climb into a car to drive the dog to the park for a walk. We didn't have 'the green thing' in our day.

Back then, we washed the baby's nappies because disposables didn't exist. After we washed them, we hung them on the clothes line to dry – wind and solar power really did dry the clothes, we didn't have to buy this from a power company. Kids got hand-me-down clothes from their brothers or sisters, new stuff was made at home, on a sewing machine if you were lucky.



Yes, we managed all this without a degree in environmental science, and we didn't even have 'the green thing' back in our day.

Back then, we considered ourselves lucky to have one TV, or radio, in the house – not a TV in every room. And the TV had a small screen the size of a handkerchief, not a screen the size of the state of Queensland. In the kitchen, we did everything by hand, not because it was fun, or because we wanted to be on

Master Chef – we didn't have a kitchen full of gadgets. What would be the point with only one power point in a room?



Back then, we didn't waste petrol just to mow the lawn. We used a push mower that ran on human power. So we exercised by working and had no need to spend money on, or build expensive health clubs full of exercise technology and treadmills that operate on electricity.

Sure it was hard work, and we got thirsty, but the air was cleaner, and when we worked up a sweat we'd drink water straight from the tap, not buy it in a plastic bottle.

Back then, people took the tram or a bus and kids rode their bikes to school or walked instead of turning their mums into a 24-hour taxi service. You didn't hear about half the population being afflicted with obesity.

Curious really that the current generation laments how wasteful we were just because we didn't have 'the green thing' back then?

Submitted by Barbara Malcolm



Age and Experience

How to Lend a Helping Hand

I don't mean to sound ungrateful here, but please...

The other day, as I was boarding the train at Mittagong, I was almost swept off my feet (actually more yanked off my feet) by an ageing, not-so-debonair gent. As I stepped onto the train, gripping the door rail, my better foot only just on the step and my main contact with terra firma being my weaker leg and walking stick, the said ageing, not-so-debonair gent grabbed my 'walking stick' arm and endeavoured to shove me onto the train. This action removed about 80 % of my support and, if I hadn't had a firm grip on the door rail, I would have fallen backwards out of the train.

It just wasn't my day for being helpfully helped. At the end of the journey as I was stepping off the train at Central Station, I had just placed my walking stick and the foot of my weaker leg onto the platform when an older woman grabbed my 'walking stick' arm and endeavoured to hoist me off the train. Again, I was saved by my firm grip on the door rail.

Now, what's the point of my ungrateful whinge?

If you see someone with mobility problems and you think they need help, don't just barge in and 'help'. Ask them if you can help – any plain question that lets them know you're willing to help but gives them the chance to say what they need or to decline your offer.

If the person declines, accept it and give them room to do what they're trying to do.

If they do want your help, DON'T grab them by the arm or under the elbow with all your strength – this throws the person off balance and can be enough to cause them further injury, especially if they also have shoulder problems brought on by their poor mobility.

If they do want you to help, bend your elbow and allow them to TAKE YOUR ARM. This puts them in control of the situation and enables them to use the amount of help they need. An important point here – when you bend your elbow, make your arm firm so the person has something of substance to hold. Offering a limp arm for support is worse than offering no arm. Also, don't try to help someone if you, yourself, are not strong enough.

Of course, this is about lending a hand to a person with mobility problems. People with other problems, such as vision impairment, may need different assistance but again it's their choice whether or not help is needed. Always ask first what you can do then, if needed, you can lend a hand.

Robyn Smith, SHOWN

Here's a tip as you get older:
Never wear a hearing aid,
because if you do,
people expect you
to listen to them.



From the first to the last supper

Humans begin life at the breast
Quicker than a wink, there you are in school
Asked at the tender age of five to do your best
Here begins our first taste of death
To creativity, vividity and imagination
Upon such sad and strictured structure
And with this we build a nation? Hours wasted on
administration
Long gone are the visions
Nothing but division – too many rules and crap

Media pouts and sashays about
Filling our lives with derision
Media is blind, unsighted – an opportunity to educate
blighted
Politician (lower case 'p' please)
All of them grasping at trivial clichés
In managing mirrored mediocrity

Old age what a treat
All you get is reconstituted meat
Living in boxes small and smaller – waiting for a call
Or a visit from a rellie – can't understand what that is
on tellie
Life without season – families are treason
Lord take me before I lose my reason

Glenys Buselli

Letters to the Editor



Loss of a Dear Friend

Like you all, I have lost a dear and valued friend. I still had much to learn from Helen Young. She kept telling me to write about the days when I went off as a registered nurse, to a small country hospital, (recently widowed with a small child). She always said, "I'll edit it for you!". She always complained that I'd use three or four words when one would do.

I attended the service to say goodbye, and was sorry I could not join you all at the "Clontarf Hilton" to meet and say hello. My daughter and friends had to work the next day. I was sure you would all honour her.

Your friendly member of OWN

Mona Wacker

Still keeping pace!

How good to hear news of you Peggy. I am hoping with these warm sunny days you are feeling more adventurous and congratulations to Joy Ross on winning the Mother's Day quilt.

Now, after nearly three years of learning to live alone following 60 years of marriage, I still find days – especially the dull wet ones – when I need a good talking to, to get up and get going. But thanks to good neighbours and friends –

although why do they keep falling off the perch? – U3A courses, and of course OWN, life is pretty good.

Still being able to drive helps, but at 85 the dreaded driving test is ahead. I recently spent ten days in Alice Springs with my precious granddaughter and two great grandchildren: Bella, six years, and James, one year old. It was interesting and exhausting. My daughter and her partner also live there, both girls are 5ft 8ins to my 5ft 2, and they have long legs to walk, which leaves me nearly running to keep up! Came home very fit and now take much longer steps!

Also congratulations to Trude Kallir for being awarded an OA, a fitting reward for her dedication to Social Justice.

Nancy Brown

Community Action

Early morning on Austinmer beach, May 29, raking out 15 metre letters for Stop Coal Seam Gas! The tide was running out, the wind had dropped, only a few clouds, a good omen for our human banner to be filmed from a chopper at midday. Earlier in the year I had viewed a home video DVD filmed in the US called Gaslands, and once I had heard that 15 applications for exploration had been approved up on the escarpment, I knew something had to happen.

One thousand people had registered, three thousand arrived. All well-rehearsed and marked out, they were readily assembled. Midday three choppers circled to film, we waved and cheered. A wonderful sense of community, a great family day too.

Exhilaration from success can be exhausting, so I bolted home to beat the tide, ideas flowing for fund raisers

to pay the chopper (one was ours), a possible Royal Commission, but who knows, after such a positive start! 2,000 signed the petition.

You can read more on:

www.stop-csg-illawarra.org

Ceri Ritchie

Free Help To Save Power

The Office of Environment and Heritage, NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, are conducting a Home Savings Program for eligible households. The program can help save up to 20% off the power and/or water bill which will help you and the environment. Eligible households must be in NSW, hold one of the following: a Centrelink Pensioner Concession Card, a Department of Veterans Affairs Pensioner Concession Card, a Department of Veterans Affairs Gold Repatriation Health Card, a Department of Veterans' Affairs White Repatriation Health Card, a Centrelink Low Income Health Care Card or be a recognised energy utility hardship customer.

Contact details are: Office of Environment and Heritage, 59-61 Goulburn St, Sydney. Telephone: 1300 662 416 to book (or 9995 5000 - switchboard); email: powersavings@environment.nsw.gov.au or the website: www.environment.nsw.gov.au.

The free power savings kit is worth around \$200 and includes a variety of pieces of equipment plus an assessment in your home by an energy expert. They even have a nifty little gadget they can plug in and place it against your fridge or other piece of equipment and it tells you the dollar rate to run the equipment.

Point of View

A Secular Delusion

We are all watching what is happening in the Middle East as people struggle for more control of the government of their countries. But another struggle is emerging there. In Egypt there is disagreement between those wanting a secular government and those demanding an Islamic state. Even in Turkey, which has had a secular government for almost a hundred years, there are Islamists looking for more control in government.

Here in Australia, we have supposedly had a secular government, with firm division between the church and state. Many of us, who have watched the tax-payer money given to private schools, run by churches of many denominations, have voiced concerns about the influence of church on state. Many have been horrified by the influence of the various religious lobbies on decisions taken by government.

Nowhere more so than in NSW over the last few weeks. Here the state government wanted to pass an Industrial Relations law which discriminates against Public Servants and will particularly affect women, because they make up a large part of the work force as teachers, nurses and such. In order to get it passed in the upper house, the NSW Government needed the support of Fred Nile, doyen of the Christian Democrat party.

Fred Nile promised his support, if the government would support his move to get rid of ethics classes in schools. In other words, he would support their discriminatory industrial legislation if they supported his discriminatory religious legislation. One can understand Friedrich Nietzsche saying, 'After coming into contact with a religious man I always feel I must wash my hands.'

What is Fred Nile saying? That religion is more important than ethics? That you can't be ethical unless you have religious beliefs? Or, even more incredible, that ethics have no place in religion?

The Council of Churches spoke up in support of his move. So what are they saying? Basically, that churches don't want ethics classes available for the children of parents who won't allow their children to be indoctrinated about religion in Scripture classes.

And what is the NSW Government saying? That they believe in discriminatory, non-ethical, non-secular government? We pay good salaries to members of parliament for them to discriminate against women, to discriminate against those who are not religious, to pay lip-service only to secular government.

This was said more than two hundred years ago,

'Man will never be free until the last king is strangled with the entrails of the last priest.' Denis Diderot.

Unfortunately religion is only part of the lobby system that influences decisions made by governments. We'd need a lot of entrails to strangle all those power brokers.

Lorraine Inglis



Our Mistakes

Our mistakes are like leaves in the roadway

Some scattered, some dirty and brown

Through the year they have gathered, now fallen

And confront us, a reason to frown

For we all make mistakes in our fashion

And may not get the chance to atone

But each person has choice in the outcome

To redeem it or leave things alone

Some errors are best left unaltered

Like the leaves, they will wither away

For the promise of spring's round the corner

New habits, new leaves, a new day.

JMB (SHOWN)

Aboriginal Support Circle Issues

The Sydney Women's Fund supports Aboriginal Women to Combat Violence

The Aboriginal Women against Violence project in South West Sydney has received funding of \$10,000 from the Sydney Women's Fund to ensure that more Aboriginal Women can attend their training program which is helping to reduce the instance of violence against women and children. The Joan Harrison Support Services for Women, which runs the project, was selected for this philanthropic grant because it offers an education program specifically designed by Aboriginal women for Aboriginal women, to train and mentor them to become future trainers and advocates in their own communities. Aboriginal women are four times more likely to be the victims of domestic violence than non-Aboriginal women. Earlier programs have been successful and have led to women who have completed the program forming networks, thereby passing on knowledge which has benefitted more women around them at different ages and stages. This funding will go towards running the program for more women so they can become empowered to go back to their communities and help other women.

The Sydney Women's Fund is the only philanthropic fund supporting women and girls in Greater Sydney. Aboriginal Women Against Violence is one of seven inaugural projects that form part of the Sydney Women's Fund's first year of grant-making to help women and girls achieve their potential and live safely without fear or discrimination or disadvantage.

I'm really excited about this project and am going to make enquiries at www.sydneycommunityfoundation.org.au

Their contact number is: 9251 1228 and email address is:

krisytimansfield@sydneycommunityfoundation.org.au

Pat Zinn

Labour-hire Firm Puts Indigenous People First

First People HR is a joint venture between Aboriginal businessman Paul Knight, employment services veteran, Kevin Chandler and the NSW Business Chamber. Latest Bureau of Statistics figures show almost one in five Indigenous people are unemployed, compared with one in twenty Australians overall. Paul Knight was NSW manager for the Aboriginal Employment Covenant but because many Indigenous people finding employment leave their jobs after a short time, for various reasons, First People HR would keep workers in its own books for the first six months of their placement in a business. There would be continuing support for workers during that period, after which, all going well, they would be hired by the business involved.

Kevin Chandler, who co-founded one of Australia's largest employment agencies, and who came out of retirement to set up First People HR, has said, "We'll be using tried and true recruitment processes, but applied to a very disadvantaged group".

The company has refused to accept any state or federal funding or contracts because it does not want to be seen as an extended form of welfare.

Pat Zinn



Aboriginal Support Circle Issues

Remote Communities to Benefit from Federal Government's Carbon Package

The Federal Government has promised \$40 million to help remote communities across Australia install clean energy technology - such as solar and wind turbines - as well as \$22 million to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to take part in carbon abatement projects relating to caring for country, such as feral animal control, reforestation and land management practices. For example, the North Kimberley Fire Abatement project involves reducing emissions by conducting cool, prescribed burns on country, with the emissions saved on-sold to industry.

National Native Council's chief executive, Brian Wyatt, has stated that "Indigenous peoples have strong connections to country", so for them to be able to earn a living caring for and protecting their land is a welcome opportunity, as well as a practical solution to help close the disadvantage gap.

Pat Zinn

Two Valley Trail Reconciliation Walk

Canterbury Aboriginal Advisory Group and the Cooks River Valley Association invites the community to walk on Sunday 18 September 2011. The walk starts at various times and locations along the Cooks River and Wolli Creek Valley.

For information and to register for the walk in advance go to www.crva.org.au. Bookings are essential if you wish to join the walk through the Wolli Valley. Walkers to arrive from 11.30am onwards at Gough Whitlam Reserve (Bayview Ave, Earlwood) for free family activities and BBQ. Acknowledgement of Country: 12.30pm.

For general enquiries about the Reconciliation Walk: ring **0414 910 816**

Support La Perouse Public School

By directing your Coles and Woolworth vouchers to the school, you will be helping them maximise their efforts.

Woolworths: From 18 July to 18 September 2011, will give you one Woolworths Earn & Learn point for every \$10 you spend in store (excluding the purchase of cigarettes, alcohol and gift cards or purchases made through Woolworths online or at Caltex Woolworths co-branded fuel outlets). Points will automatically appear on your shopping docket, which you simply take to your school. Schools can then collect and upload their points. You'll be able to check your school's points by using the search box below.

When the nine-week program ends, schools redeem points against a choice of more than 7,000 educational resources including library books, classroom equipment, art & craft materials and much, much more. Vouchers can be sent to **Lucy Porter at 7 Wills Avenue, Chifley 2036.**

Coles: From 29 July to 18 October for every \$10 you spend in a Coles, Coles online, BI-LO or Pick 'n' Pay supermarket you will earn one Sports for Schools voucher that your school can redeem for sports gear. Vouchers can be sent to **Lucy Porter at 7 Wills Avenue, Chifley 2036.**

If you shop online, vouchers earned will automatically be tallied to your Coles online account, you need to register their allocation to La Perouse Public School number: **21695** by visiting: www.sportsforschools.com.au/colesonline between 1 - 15 November to donate your voucher tally. Your Coles online voucher tally will then be transferred to your nominated school's online tally. Last year, Coles gave away over \$7 million worth of sports gear to over 7,600 schools across Australia.

Pat Zinn

At and Beyond the Rocks



OWN Sydney Report for September

This report for OWN Sydney will be necessarily brief because, with only two committee members able to attend the August meeting, there was much that had to be held over. The downside of having such a small number on committee is that when people are absent, too few are present for decisions to be taken, and not enough people to bounce ideas off, either.

OWN Sydney AGM has been relocated to Wednesday, 5 October to allow more of our enthusiastic members to attend. It will be held in Mott Hall, after Sydney Wellness concludes, so we will open the AGM at 12:30. The business of the day will follow so that we hear about activities of OWN Sydney and all its groups over the past year. Elections to OWN Sydney committee will take place (nominations forms will be to hand and nominations can be received from the floor), after which the new committee will be welcomed **MOST WARMLY**.

There will be plenty of time to meet old mates and catch up on their doings, and there will be a delicious lunch! But there's always a catch, isn't there? The catch is that, if you want to eat, you will have to RSVP to Judith Daley by 28 September, on 9181 3249 or by email on: jadrjc13@bigpond.com. Please let Judith know if you have any dietary issues that we can realistically accommodate. I am signing off as a committee member, which, after seven years, is surely long enough to have proved worthy of my retirement. I shall be in London helping my sisters to celebrate a 75th and an 80th birthday, and that means this is also my swansong as far as OWN Sydney reports for *OWN Matters* goes.

To a bit of business: Beth reports that there is money in both the computer training fund and the fuel/mileage claim fund, which should be used by the relevant groups. If unused, your funding must be returned. Beth has the details, most of which have already been sent out to

OWN Sydney AGM

The AGM of OWN Sydney has been **rescheduled**.

It will now take place:

Wednesday, October 5,
at 12.30 in Mott Hall,
Millers Point.

We will hear the reports from the various groups in OWN Sydney, and elect a new committee.

This is an opportunity for OWN Sydney members to gather, catch up with old friends, and talk.

If you are coming, RSVP to Judith Daley : 9181 3249 or at jadrjc13@bigpond.com by September 28.

those groups who can claim for money from either fund. Please act now!

Well, I'm off! I wish my fellow committee members a successful AGM and the full complement of members for the new committee.

Brigid Sen

At and Beyond the Rocks

Blacktown OWN

Here we are...heading into Spring and we have had a fantastic couple of months at Blacktown, despite the cold, bleak winter.

This year at our Annual Meeting, in March, it was declared to be a 'To It' year.

You know, I'll get around to it!!!

Well, so many of our group are doing just that.

Firstly we approached the Blacktown City Council with our heads held high and 'right' on our side.

Yes, raise your hats to Woman Power.

Our Hall has been refurbished with two previously loved but in great working order, air conditioners...so now we enjoy ourselves in comfort, no more cold feet or chills around the shoulders.

Go on, try it if your facilities need upgrading...we did and came out on top!

Our President, Coral, went travelling on the Ghan and had a fantastic holiday with her grandson. Another of our group travelled through Europe by herself, to reconnect with family and friends left behind when she emigrated to Australia.

Members of our Cancer Support Group are giving comfort and support to our friends in need of help at this crucial time of their illness. Thank goodness for the love and caring we give to each other.

Our July meeting was a non event as so many of us, including our President, were absent.

Our Christmas in July was well attended but we were a tad disappointed in the food, the atmosphere and also it wasn't the most scenic of views...straight across to the major road works being done. Still, with our determination to have a great time, we rescued the whole event from being unsuccessful to being another 'great time had by all'.

Our line dancers are working up quite a reputation, along with our African Drummers.

The Drumming Group is going from strength to strength with now 20 of us each week and a couple of gigs booked for us to perform.

August will see the Blacktown OWN members being asked to partake in a Blacktown City Council investigation into the needs of the Ageing Community.

Now that is a positive indication of how well we are doing - our opinions and knowledge are

being utilized and sought out to help with future planning.

Go on...now it's YOUR turn to go 'TO IT'.

Christine Sales Blacktown

SHOWN

Our new Committee members have settled in and are working well. The extra women have made things so much better, giving us plenty of people to do the unexpected jobs on meeting days.

Our August guest speaker was Natalie Traynor, a local audiologist who owns and operates a local hearing centre. She told us she has been an audiologist for more than twenty years, which, by our calculations would mean she must have started her training in kindergarten. Anyway, youthful appearance aside, she was an excellent speaker - informative, able to speak in plain English and ever aware that people might not have heard a question that someone had asked.

Later this month some of us are attending a talk about wills presented by our July guest speaker, solicitor, Chris Young, as part of the Law Society's Wills Awareness Day.

We are currently busy planning activities for our 'Getting To Know You' meeting in September. This has become a firm favourite with many members as they like the games we play and the chance to mix with other members of the group.

Also in September, twenty of us will be going to see *Jersey Boys*. We have heard one or two negative comments about the show but a lot of positive comments so we are looking forward to the chance to judge for ourselves.

Robyn Smith
SHOWN Coordinator

Hastings OWN Charity

Hastings Headway provides community access programs for people, with an acquired brain injury, aged between 15 and 60. It offers respite and accommodation services (through brokerage), community education, including the schools program for people in primary and high school, advocacy for consumers and their

At and Beyond the Rocks

families/carers, information and referral carer support, educational and social activities. A bimonthly newsletter is issued.



Joy (in green top), presenting Andrea, coordinator of Hastings Headway with a cheque for \$330 collected by Joy at our meetings, morning tea and outings

Congratulations to our small band of ladies for being so generous.

Andrea and some of the lovely guys. We have had lunch with them and try to catch up when we can.

Pam Kenyon

Friendship

With each of us talking over the others to make our own greetings heard, we embrace, exchange quick snippets of family news and feel the warmth of age - old friendships being re-confirmed.

Together again for the first time in months, we saunter along, chattering away, calling to those in front and behind us, we melt into the comfort of being accepted for who we are, no matter how much time has passed since the forging of those special friendships.

At the beginning it was just us, now it is us as well as our partners and, of course, our children,

then our children's partners and now our grandchildren ... so it has been with our friendships.

We don't have too many occasions within the year to meet up in the physical sense, as our lives have moved us to distant places and ventures, so that when we are together it is like a round robin of conversation for the first hour and then we settle into just being with each other again.

How quickly the years have passed and how much the same we are, with these friends, as when the friendships were first formed!

Christine Sales, Blacktown OWN

News from Hastings OWN

Hi everyone! Just a bit of news from Hastings OWN.

We had our AGM on 15 July 2011 and it was pleasing that our committee from 2010 -2011 remained in their positions. Ella accepted the position of Treasurer as Jenny hasn't been well. We have had a great committee for the last two years. Our committee members share the workload and I say thank you to them.

We have had some good guest speakers like the Mental Health Nurse from Division of General Practice, who gave an interesting talk on depression in some of the older members of the community. We also had a speaker from Commonwealth Care Link which a lot of our members didn't know about. They were not aware of these services.

One of our members has moved from Port Macquarie to a very exclusive aged care facility. We took her out for lunch, will keep in touch with her by phone and some members will visit her.

Farewell June Clarke



Parramatta: a City of Surprises

Parramatta is a wonderful destination for a day trip. It's easy to get to by train, bus and car or, if coming from Circular Quay, a scenic 50-minute trip on the Rivercat ferry. On arrival catch the free 'Loop' bus connecting the transport interchange, the wharf, the Visitors Centre, St Patricks Catholic Cathedral and the Parramatta Leagues Club.

There are so many interesting places to visit. Parramatta Park and Old Government House, both World Heritage listed are significant sites relating to Australia's convict heritage. Elizabeth Farm (1793) is a hands-on house museum, and was once the home of John and Elizabeth Macarthur. Nearby Hambeldon Cottage (1824) was purpose built for the Macarthur family's governess. Experiment Farm (1835) will take you through the story of James Ruse who 'sow'd the first seed' and the interesting life of Surgeon John Harris. All of these historic places will surely transport you back to early colonial days as they showcase Parramatta's rich social and architectural heritage.

Parramatta Heritage and Visitors centre (ph: 8839 3311) will tell you all about tours that are available, days, times and costs. At the Visitors Centre there are fascinating and innovatively curated free exhibitions worth seeing. Opposite the Visitors Centre is the iconic Riverside Theatres where many engaging, world class theatrical and musical performances are regularly scheduled.

The Visitors Centre will tell you all about what's in store. Just up from Riverside is St Patricks Catholic Cathedral. St Johns Anglican Cathedral is opposite the Town Hall in Church Street Mall. To top off all of these great attractions there are all types of restaurants to tempt any palate in Parramatta's very own 'Eat Street', which is located at the Northern end of Church Street between Macquarie Street and Victoria Road.

If you make the Visitors Centre your first stop on the free 'Loop' bus you will find a vast array of pamphlets containing all the information and helpful suggestions to help you make the most of your day. There is also a big shopping complex (with cinemas), which is air-conditioned year round for your comfort.

There is a lot that's free and for a \$2.50 transport fee, Parramatta will provide you with a great day out. Come, discover and enjoy.

Parramatta OWN

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS * NEWS FROM THE GROUPS * NEWS

Theatre Group



We have now finished our project of performing our *Village People* show in seven centres within the Sydney City Council area. The last three performances were at Ultimo, Alexandria and Redfern. Ultimo and Redfern were quite difficult for both audience and performers because of language problems. There was a large audience at Ultimo sitting around tables waiting for their *Christmas in July* lunch and approximately 90% of them were of Asian origin, probably Chinese, so the words of our songs and skits may have been largely a mystery to them. We thought this because many people in the audience started talking among themselves, possibly wondering what it was all about. The situation was similar at Redfern although in a smaller venue. We can only hope they enjoyed the music and our glittery waistcoats even if they didn't understand what we were 'on about'.

At Alexandria, although only a few kilometres away, the audience was really with us and we received a warm reception which proved the old adage that, although the show might be the same, each audience is different.

After all the finding our way to inner city community centres, sometimes with Veronica having to find a taxi to lug the keyboard and props, it was a relief and a pleasure to perform at the OWN NSW Conference to a receptive and appreciative audience. We knew we were among friends.

The winner of our hamper raffle was Barbara Burnham who generously re-donated the whole hamper to the Harry Jensen Centre in the Rocks. Second prize went to Pat Cook, a long-time community worker.

The last few weeks have been busy and we are all looking forward to a break. No more performances until 6 September, in Cronulla, and then in October it's off to Perth!

Halcyon Evans

Our OWN Writers

The Lioness, the Window and Me

Driving the circuit, on our second game drive
There were so many wondrous sights.
We saw rhino, buffalo, zebra and more
And baboons, climbing trees to great heights.

Then on the road up ahead, a lioness and her cub
Ambling past our truck, unconcerned, wild and free.
I was held spellbound, she was almost in reach
It was just the lioness, the window and me.

I could not make use of the camera at hand
Because all I could do was to stare
As her liquid eyes seemed to seek out mine
And that moment in time we did share.

When thoughts of Kenya pop into my mind
And I let my fond memories roam free
There is one that will surpass all the rest –
That of the lioness, the window and me.

Laurelle SHOWN



Connie's Story

On 26 March 1971, my family and I arrived in Sydney from Volos, Greece.

We travelled from Athens to Aden, Saudi Arabia by plane and from there to Sydney by ship. The trip took 21 days and I can say that we enjoyed it. It was the first time we had seen dolphins and whales, and there were so many of them. Our first stop was the island of Mauritius, followed by Fremantle, Melbourne and finally Sydney. I remember sailing into the most beautiful harbour in the world.

After we landed, we travelled to Mascot, which changed our impression of Australia. Looking at the fibro and timber houses and tin roofs we thought we had made a mistake in coming to this country. Most people dressed very casually and wore thongs. Back home only poor people dressed like that.

Where was the lucky country that we had heard so much about? We soon realised that our biggest obstacle was our lack of English. I was 18 years old, the eldest of three children, none of us spoke a word of English and this made life very hard. I remember my 13 year old sister and 7 year old brother crying and refusing to go to school every morning. Everyone was unhappy and we wanted to go back home, but we couldn't, for at least two years. I knew a bit of French from High school and that helped me to understand some words. The more I listened to people speaking and the more I watched television, the easier it became for me. I started reading before I could speak, but I never managed to attend English school until now.

Gradually things fell into place and life became easier for all of us. I married 3 years later, as did my siblings some time later. We had families of our own and we all started businesses. I have visited the old country 7 times since migrating here. Each time I stay for 2 or 3 months, either with my parents or sister's family, who all returned home for good. I also stay with my daughter and her family. She has been living in Athens since she married in 1999. My brother's family still live in Sydney. Although I miss my parents and especially my grandchildren, I don't think I could go back to Greece permanently.

After my husband died in late 2002, a lot of people suggested to me that it would be best to move back. But I don't think I will. I have been living in Australia for two thirds of my life, and I like it here. This is the place where I have worked, voted, married, had my children and gained many friends. While the beginning was difficult here, and filled with hard times, it has made me appreciate what I have today.

One thing has bothered me for years; although I finished High School I never attended University. But I am very proud of my daughter and son, who are both University graduates of the highest standard, and the best children any parent could have.

Often I sit alone and think about my life and my future. I am happy to stay in Australia and keep my memories of my life in Greece.

Connie Kondilios

Our OWN Writers

Balancing Act

It's hardly news that women need and find strength, support and comfort in relationships with their female friends, but I've been surprised by the number of my female peers who have told me how hard it is to find one or maybe two 'buddies,' friends who are readily available, share something in common and care enough about them to be good listeners.

Why is this, such a pressing issue now for us older women? It seems unlikely that we are the first generation of senior women to have such a need. My guess is there's not a simple answer. Nowadays, many people are more likely to make several residential moves over the years, meaning the long-term friendly neighbour-next-door or down the street is part of yesteryear. Today, once older women leave the companionship of the work-force or when they lose a long-term partner, the challenge of isolation and loneliness increases. The recent discovery of the skeleton of an elderly woman, who had apparently died of natural causes eight years before, is an extreme example of this situation.

Through improved medical science, we are living much longer, but often have chronic health conditions requiring much time and attention. Such essential self-care can eat into time available to 'be there' for others. Then there is the matter of the call on older women's time to care for family members, old and young. Such self-giving may, be its own reward, but it still cuts down on available opportunities to nourish close female friendships.

Going more deeply into factors behind the challenge of maintaining satisfying female friendships in our later years, we discover the matter of continuing individuation. Old friends remain as sources of reassurance, but just because we have become older and have retired does not mean we stop developing as persons who need intellectual, physical and spiritual stimulation as well as social. Our human restlessness for change and growth forces us to seek new connections. But, though it is not difficult to join small groups or organisations and though it is likely that we will meet compatible others as we do, any contact beyond the shared interest is an almost insuperable hurdle for many. In a metropolis like Sydney, simply setting up appointments and arranging to meet one another on a regular basis then becomes demanding. Phone calls and electronic communication provide a useful 'glue' for holding friendships together, but cannot replace our need for the personal presence of our friends. And finally, as older women making new friends, we have learnt a certain caution, as we know worthwhile connections take time to build.

Perhaps part of the solution is to become one's own best friend and less concerned about close connections with others. Maybe if we allow time to reflect on the lives we have lived and how well we are managing current pressure, we shall find inner equilibrium. That is, we shall discern that struggle, pain, loneliness and loss are all part of life. But we can remind ourselves that we have already overcome many hurdles and derived strength from those experiences.

Does this new self-awareness help in our quest for friendship? If we are fortunate, it puts the issue in a different perspective. Now we can appreciate as precious and significant every moment of warm encounter with others, absorbing the occasional disappointment as simply part of life. We can remain open to offering friendship in whatever manner and at whatever level we are able. We can also remain open to the questions, surprises and mysteries that relationships have to offer. In this way, it seems that our inevitable times of loneliness and need can become the essential counterpoint to the delights of satisfying friendships.

Bev Cameron

Grey Power

We are a happy older group of gals,
I'm sure over the years we have made some pals
Of these people, who gather each month for a chat
We speak up, defend our views, and that's that!

Now and then we put forth ideas,
Some agree we could run our country better than Ms G.
No offence intended, we have loads of common sense,
Just wise older women, sensible, we're not dense.

Oh well, I guess we must accept what is to be
My daughter exclaims "Mum can't you see"
"you are a little old lady, you can't change the scene"
Maybe not, but at OWN meanwhile we dream.



Helen Dalrymple

OWN Parramatta



We did it!

The Government has just announced that they share the vision for a National Disability Insurance Scheme and will begin laying the foundations for its introduction.

They also released the final report by the Productivity Commission into the NDIS.

We're trawling through the detail of the announcement and the report, but first we wanted to say a huge thank you. **You made this happen. By coming together, supporting the campaign and taking action, you showed our politicians that Every Australian Counts.** The Government's announcement today shows that when we speak up, they are prepared to listen.

But as the Government has made clear, there is more to do. We are waiting for the Opposition to come out in strong support of the Productivity Commission's recommendations and over the coming weeks and months we will all want to work to ensure the government gets the details right.

But first let's take some time to celebrate this colossal win for people with disabilities, their families and carers. After that, let's roll up our sleeves and work to make the NDIS the best it can be.

from John Della Bosca and the Every Australian Counts team.

www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au

Catholic Community Services

This agency has established a pastoral care service so if you know any person who is unwell, isolated, not mixing in the community, and may benefit from a visit: contact:

www.catholiccommunityservices.com.au / or The Customer Service Centre:

1800 225 474.

Participants do not have to be a member of the Catholic faith to participate.

Get writing to stop the closure of Medicare dental!

Monday, 01 August 2011 10:27

Minister for Health, Nicola Roxon, plans to close the Enhanced Primary Care Scheme that provides dental treatment of up to \$4,250 for people with chronic illness. The aim of the scheme is to prevent poor dental health from aggravating a patient's chronic illness. However, as part of this year's budget, the scheme is to be closed on 31 December 2011.

The legislation hasn't gone through parliament yet, so it's not known whether patients will continue to be treated after 31 December if their treatment started before the closure of the program. When the government attempted to close the scheme in 2008, there was to be no treatment post closure date.

The Australian Government has given a commitment to address the lack of public dental care in the next budget. As to how is anybody's guess, but that's why they want to close the current Medicare scheme: in order to free up funds.

Even if the Government does include a dental scheme in the 2012 budget, there will be at least a six-month gap between the closure of the chronic illness Medicare scheme and the beginning of a new one, and that's ambitiously assuming that the new scheme kicks off on 1 July 2012.

CPSA calls on readers to write to Minister Roxon and politely outline their opposition to the closure of the Enhanced Primary Care scheme before a dental scheme for people on low-incomes is ready to replace it.

The Minister's contact details are as follows:

The Hon Nicola Roxon, MP

PO Box 6022

House of Representatives

Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600

or email the Minister at:

Nicola.Roxon.MP@aph.gov.au

Perspectives

Democracy

Democracy is the hardest, most frustrating form of political process for any country to adopt. It means that you have to include every 'nutter' who likes the feel of power and the view that if the world they live in doesn't suit them, they can make it by hook or by crook, the way they want it. I am a woman who knows only just so much about life, but I still wish that I could see 50 per cent of female faces in our parliaments. And I also wish, in a truly deluded way, that they could be bi-partisan and actually weigh up the other arguments instead of the 'argy bargy' that is called debate, in our parliament. No wonder the NSW parliament is called the 'bear pit'. Not to mention the open misogyny masquerading as debate. This is aimed at our State parliamentarians. Now for the Federal.

I love my country but not with a patriotic fervour. I cannot say that I am proud of our Federal government. When is barbed wire not barbed wire? I cannot feel anything but disgust and distress at the images of people including children placed in jails on Christmas Island and at Villawood. My curiosity about this whole sorry mess is how much is all this costing? I have a strong hunch that NGOs would be able to sort out the needs of refugees (yes the world is in refugee crisis) and on a community basis, house and feed and process their lives, (not their political agenda), in a much more humane manner and at half the cost. Does this government do their sums?

If we use the most simple assessment of how the detainees are coping, all we have to do is apply this

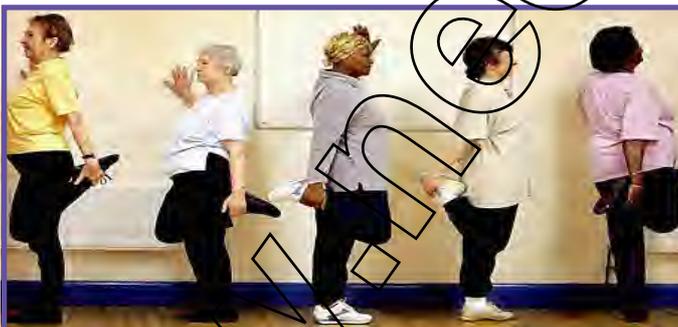
image – if you were in their shoes how would you see Australia? There have been innumerable reports by psychologists and psychiatrists about the damage done, for the long term, to the mental and physical health of these people. From their situation, Australia is not a democracy.

Why is it is hard to see right from wrong? It is because we are generally not doing too badly, and complacency is breezing through our country most of the time.

So how do I keep the scales of madness away? I read the cartoons and send them to my friends. In political cartoons is the clearest intelligence of more than just one creative wit. Some other nationalities are slightly appalled at how we ridicule our 'pollies', and sure enough we do it well. But our cartoonists would be somewhat bereft of source if politicians weren't so silly and in some cases so rotten. At this point I will give bouquets to all those men and women who wear their heart on their sleeve and have the stamina (they need it!) to stay the course and make changes. So here's to Bob Brown and Nick Xenophon!

I also use Spike Jones and his City Slickers to lift my spirits and it works. A little madness is a must in our world. Try this remedy as well. Don't watch television, don't read rubbishy newspapers and turn off the radio when the news comes around, on the hour every bloody hour.

Glenys Buselli



Stepping On

Building Confidence and Reducing Falls

This program is run by the St Vincent's Hospital Community Health Service in partnership with local councils and community centres.

The next Stepping On course starts on Tuesday 13 September, 10.30am-12.30pm for 7 weeks at Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre, Level 1, 405 Crown St Surry Hills (above the Surry Hills Library –lift available).

Bookings are essential.

For enquiries and bookings please call St Vincent's Community Health: **8382 1450**

Jessie Street National Women's Library

17th Annual Fundraising Luncheon

Monday 19 September 2011

Strangers Dining Room, Parliament House,
Macquarie St. Sydney

11.45 am for 12.30pm start

Guest Speaker: Professor Kerryn Phelps AM

From Fringe to mainstream: Turning Unconventional Ideas into Accepted Wisdom

Dr Kerryn is a prominent campaigner for indigenous health, complementary medicine, human rights and the welfare of asylum seekers. She was the first woman President of the Australian Medical Association, a television, radio and print personality and a leader of the integrative medicine movement. Professor Phelps continues to combine academic duties with patient care at her Sydney clinics.

Cost: **\$95** per person (\$90 for members of JSNWL)

RSVP Monday 12 September 2011

The Last Word

Crossing the Rubicon

'Crossing the Rubicon is a popular idiom meaning to pass a point of no return. It refers to Julius Caesar's 49 BC crossing of the river, which was considered an act of war. [Wikipedia]

Although I didn't realise it at the time, my 70th birthday last year was a crossing of my own Rubicon into the territory of old age. I'm not concerned with the obvious and general changes of physical ageing, sources of regret though these may be. But I am reflecting on loss.

In the last twelve months, two elderly relatives have died and now five others – all until recently living independent lives – now require practical care and emotional support. For my part, I find difficulty in knowing quite how to offer support, more out of sensitivity to their need to retain self-respect than reluctance to help. These experiences make me wonder how I shall be at the end of my life.

With my peer group, I am very familiar with health issues which have slowly grown more salient in our conversations. Some of us have already battled life-threatening illness. Three have already died. Many of us already battle physical disability to greater or lesser degree.

Moving further back down the life scale, the joys and disappointments of involvement with now middle-aged children and their pre-teen children come into focus. I help where I can but must let them be, whatever I might think of their life choices. The reversal of power in these relationships has come slowly and gently. I accept the changes regretfully, while grateful that my major responsibility for their welfare is over and that they have grown into gracious adults.

Their pre-teen children, my grandchildren, regard me with tolerance, patience and simple affection, accepting that I do not understand much of the on-line world in which they live. As I ponder the challenges of the adult world they will enter, I feel sympathy for them, and am not altogether unhappy about no longer having to find answers to looming world problems which they will have to confront.

More intimately, two other issues of ageing confront me regularly. The first is my energy, once abundant and easily renewed, which now needs to be spent thoughtfully. No longer is it possible to say 'yes' to everything our fascinating world has to offer. Now I must prioritise and reject some options as I know I wouldn't last the distance. The physical charge of stimulating activity is not easily replaced by going more sedately, even if the latter way of being has charms of its own.

Emotional resilience is the other issue of ageing to face.

While it's clear that ageing brings diminished physical capacity and, for many, slowing intellectual functioning as well, emotional awareness and responsiveness seem to actually deepen.

It seems I have indeed crossed the Rubicon into the land of the aged. But, unlike Julius Caesar, I shall not wage war against its inhabitants. Instead, I shall learn from them how to deal with skirmishes with the real enemies, illness and debility, and how to make the most of my senior years until death's final ambush. There will be little room for boredom.

Bev Cameron



Space

The mountains are blue now, in places black, houses in the valley all slipping back into shadows, where some find yellow lights to dispel deepening darkness of night. What a profound sense of space on this hill, of boundlessness, infinity. The thrill of spirit-soaring, mind-expanding space. Hard to keep feet to ground in such a place. Leave the patio, enter the house, go back to the comfortable life you know or stay here, under that immense moon, where the real you could whirl out into the air. Just a few times in each life, one can sense a unity with nature's force, condense one's essence into a minute fragment, cast off flesh, be one with the ferment. At such times spirits, angels are revealed, questions answered, untold secrets unsealed. On other nights, the mundane life embrace. Tonight, free spirit, fly into the space.

Jeanne B. Kantor 1976

OWN Sydney Notices

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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.
10.45 - 11.45 Tai Chi.

Lost Ladies

10.00am every Wednesday 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 to join us on **Tuesday 13 September** to see *Jane Eyre*. Recommended for viewing is *Beginners*. Please ring Yetty on **9665 2050** to check details of films.

Bondi Junction Coffee and Gossip Group

30 September 11am The Coffee Shop, Eastern Suburbs Leagues Club.
Last Friday of every month. Contact Yetty on **9665 2050** to check details.

Northern Beaches Coffee Group

The Northern Beaches coffee meeting is on the **last Saturday** of the month at café HIT in the arcade next to Woolworth's on Oakes Avenue, Dee Why.
Do come and join Noel **9971 0021** and Sandra **9984 1769** for a great coffee and chat at the HIT Café, Oakes Avenue - in the arcade next to Woolworths at 9.30 -11.30am, **24 September**.

Book Club

19 September 12.30-2.30 pm at 87 Lower Fort Street.
This month's book is: *The Book Thief* by **Markus Zusak**.
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 **17 October** meeting is *The Nether Region* by **Sue Gough**.

Aboriginal Support Circle

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

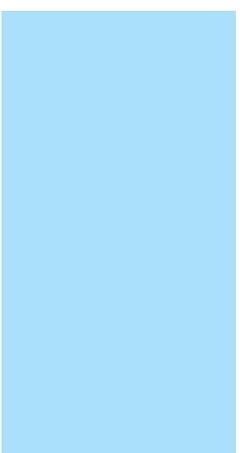
We meet from 10.30 a.m. to 12.00 noon at Birkenhead Café, 1st floor Birkenhead Shopping Complex.
Contacts: Nora Huppert 9181 3918 and Bev Cameron 9957 5367.
The dates are Saturdays **10 and 24 September**.

**IF UNDELIVERED PLEASE RETURN TO:
Older Women's Network NSW Inc.
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