



OWN MATTERS

Deaf or demented? Joy of Gardening. It's about time.

Honouring a Great Feminist. Lies, Lies and Urban Myths.

Instant Communications. Ageism takes a toll. Gender inequality.

Those Dames. For What It's Worth. Beloved Pip.



Spirited women celebrate IWD

Inspirational speakers,
glorious belly dancers and
delicious food - a great way
to enjoy a special day



New seeds in old grounds

How one woman has
changed the outlook at the
OWN Sydney office with
her green thumb



The future sounds fuzzy

With family history pointing
to deafness or dementia, old
age could become a quiet
decline for some



Share message of courtesy

Are new communication
methods the solution or
the problem in our busy
modern world?



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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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Deaf or Demented? With a family history pointing to both, the relatives won't know whether you heard the question or just didn't understand it!

There have been many reports in the media that seniors with hearing loss are significantly more likely to develop dementia over time than those who retain their hearing.

Prof Frank Lin, from the Centre on Ageing and Health at Johns Hopkins University, studied the cognitive abilities of a group of people in their 60s. He found that participants with greater hearing loss showed poorer scores on standard cognition tests.

Dr. Lin and colleagues say a number of mechanisms “may be theoretically implicated in the observed association between hearing loss and incident dementia.”

Brain abnormalities may contribute independently to both conditions, researchers say. It could be that, by making individuals more socially isolated, hearing loss could lead to dementia.

Of course people who are deaf may be diagnosed as having dementia, and people who have dementia may be diagnosed as being deaf.



They were the answer, but are they now?

“With colleagues at the National Institute on Ageing, we’re also currently studying the association between hearing loss and MRI [magnetic resonance images] of the brain to see how hearing loss may affect brain function,” Dr. Lin noted.

What are my chances? Will I end up deaf? Demented? My family is given to longevity, on both sides, most of them living into their nineties.

On my mother’s side, despite their age, none have ended up with deafness or dementia. The last one standing, my uncle, at 93, can still have a

conversation on the phone. On my father’s side deafness is a problem. Most of them lived into their nineties too.

It is impossible to have a conversation with my last aunt because she is profoundly deaf. I rang her when my mother died, and she answered, “I can’t hear a word you say. Write a letter.” At 94, she still reads. None of them ended up with dementia.

I’m hoping that the genes will give me longevity, with neither deafness nor dementia. I have a fifty/fifty chance on the deafness, but I’m hoping for better odds on the dementia.

But what if, despite the genes, I end up with dementia? In that case I don’t want the longevity.

If I am as old as some of my relatives were, and someone asks me a question, and I’m deaf, I won’t be able to hear the question, and if I’m demented, I won’t be able to understand the question. Whoever has asked the question won’t know whether I’m deaf, demented or both.

Lorraine Inglis



Letters

New Look Newsletter

To my dear friends of the Wednesday Editorial Team, I would like to say how impressed I am by the 'New Look' newsletter. Do pass on a pat on the back to all concerned. It's so fresh and uncluttered, so professional.

I was there when our first effort to keep in touch was one sheet with the minutes of our last meeting and a notice or two. Quite a leap forward! I keep hoping I can get my legs and feet going to get in and see you all, and let you know how proud I am of the job you are doing. Keep up the good work.

Peggy Hewett

.....

Thank you, Jane

For years I looked out of the back windows of OWN wishing something could be done about that back patch. There was just a big tree, entangled with vines and land that fell away badly. We did put plans to City Council for a back door and more toilets years ago, but nothing eventuated.

Then you came along! I was so thrilled a few weeks ago to see a



OWN Matters new editorial team

green lawn edged with gardens planted with beans, herbs and cosmos and things growing, and bags of mulch and big stones to edge it all. This week I saw you'd planted three passionfruit and lavender - I nicked some parsley and sweet basil. Love it!

Joy Ross

.....

Apology

OWN Matters Editorial Team would like to apologise for an omission. In February OWN Matters, Page 10, the name of the author, Morgana Oliver-Ayers, did not appear with the article "Congratulations, Cate".

We are really sorry that this has happened, and hope that

it will not stop Morgana from contributing to the newsletter in the future.

OWN Matters Editorial Team

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Dear Women,
I hope all your plans and activities for IWD went well. Thought I would circulate my favourite saying this year. It's from feminist Dale Spender.

"Feminism has fought no wars. It has killed no opponents. It has set up no concentration camps, starved no enemies, practiced no cruelties. Its battles have been for education, for the vote, for better working conditions, for safety on the streets, for childcare, for social welfare, for rape crisis centres,

women's refuges, reforms in law." If someone says "Oh I'm not a feminist," I ask, "Why? What's your problem?"

Denele Crozier



NRMA Ad

I was enraged when I saw that outdoor advertisement by the NRMA showing an older woman driving her younger perhaps grandson's car. Why is it considered funny to treat older people with such disrespect?

How often we watch in horror on TV the results of tragic car crashes with the deaths of so many young people in cars driven by another young person.

Now at 86, and still having a full licence, I do limit my area and avoid peak hour and I have also decided not to drive at night.

I join Paul Versteegen, CPSA, in calling on NRMA to immediately withdraw their "Granny can you drive my car" and give us older drivers an assurance that "no disrespect was intended."

Nancy Brown



Congratulations

Congratulations to all the women who are on the Editorial Team of the newsletter. The last two editions have both been such an easy and interesting read! The change of format and the use of colour is an invitation to get stuck in immediately.

Thanks to the Team.

Helen Poole



March OWN Matters

My name is Kit. I'm a volunteer with OWN NSW. Beth asked me to send you an email about a call I received a call from a member, Marian Pillow. Marian said the March issue of OWN Matters was just wonderful in colour and layout. She thought it was one of the best.

Kit Cheung



IWD presentation

For International Women's day I was invited by OWN to do a presentation at the IWD seminar

(see p14). I presented some of the data from a recent global study on Understanding Gender Equality in Women's NGOs, with the question of why there has been so little world wide gain in achieving gender equality.

Although I have not yet published these results I was pleased to have the opportunity to present an overview to such an interested group of women. It was a privilege to be part of the wonderful seminar.

Ruth Phillips



Festival of Ideas

I think you can consider your Festival of Ideas morning a huge success. I really enjoyed giving my presentation (see p14), and if you need me to do anything else please ask.

The good news is that ABC Bundaberg, 2UE and Sky News, who interviewed me after my talk, picked it up. The story has also been picked up by *The Australian* who want me to write a piece about older women and work, and *The Financial Review* who want to interview me. Nice to see the concerns of older women getting some airplay. Hope you enjoyed the rest of your IWD!

Leanne Cutcher



At and Beyond the Rocks

International Women's Day splash at Bankstown!

I would be the first person to admit that my swimming skills leave a lot to be desired. In fact, I cannot swim.

In addition, this body is no longer the trim, taut and terrific shape that it once was! Pamela Anderson, of Baywatch fame, has no competition from this woman.

You are probably wondering where I am going with this and the funniest thing is, it is related to International Women's Day celebrations held in Bankstown on Wednesday March 6.

I volunteered to assist on the day, little suspecting that I would be asked to be pool supervisor at the women's aqua aerobics session for the day.

Bankstown City Council, in conjunction with a network of women's services within the Bankstown LGA, auspices a day of celebration of women with a full day of fun and enjoyment of our cultural backgrounds,

values and abilities. The day started with a Chinese drumming welcome and women were then encouraged to enjoy a wonderful variety of activities including Zumba, arts and crafts, guided relaxation, henna tattooing, aqua aerobics, hand massage, makeup application, morning tea, lunch, and a festival of womanhood in all its diversity.

There were no high-minded speeches, no political agendas, no agendas other than celebrating and valuing the importance of being a woman.

One of our wonderfully skilled facilitators at the Older Women's Network Bankstown Wellness Centre provided the women with a wonderful workout in the pool. The outcome was thirty women of all cultures, loads of laughter, splashes and smiles.

Our members celebrated with genuine enjoyment and it was truly inspiring to see women of all shapes and sizes, all dress styles, all cultures, simply getting in there and having fun without judgement or inhibition. This is as it should be, but is not always the case.

The good news is that no one required rescuing. Thankfully, I did not have to get into the pool and was happy to stay on the pool deck.

Side note... I was asked to assist by demonstrating how the exercises were to be done. That was funny and it is really lucky that I don't mind laughing at myself!

Dianne Brookes

Spirited Women of the Illawarra

For International Women's Day members of Illawarra OWN and Illawarra Wellness Centre joined with their guests at the Corrimal Community Centre to enjoy tasty international treats at a morning tea to celebrated "Spirited Women of the Illawarra".

Virginia Keft-Kennedy, director and principal of the Cinnamon Twist Belly Dance Troupe, got the day off to a colourful start. Virginia has studied this traditional Middle Eastern art form for over seventeen years, earned a PhD on the subject from Wollongong University

and is much more than just a Belly Dancer. Her interesting talk on the myths, legends and history of Belly Dancing was very informative and enlightening.

Next, Margaret Chadwick gave us a brief outline of the prolonged but ultimately successful 1912 strike by women textile workers in Chicago, before introducing our SilverTOWNs singing group. They led us in a hearty rendition of “Bread and Roses.”

Jeune Taylor’s talk on “Where Are We Now?” spoke of the many women who have achieved success in a man’s world: Lara Giddings, Premier of Tasmania, Marie Bashir, Governor of NSW and Quentin Bryce, our Governor General, to name a few. She also spoke of the many women who are still fighting for justice and the need for us to support them.

Our Keynote speaker, Monica Chalmers, comes from a long line of activists and a family steeped in the tradition of fighting for a fair go.

As a young woman in the Illawarra, Monica sought to create a world where women – married or single – had the right

to work, a contentious issue in her young days.

Mining and Steel Manufacture were the big employers of labour in the area and there was little opportunity for women to gain meaningful or fulfilling employment, or employment of any kind in those industries. While fighting these injustices, (Monica remarked she has more T-shirts with slogans and messages on them than a Salvation Army Op shop), she also fought for the rights of Aboriginal people and for other women’s issues that needed to be addressed.

She hasn’t slowed down much – there’s still a lot of fight in this pioneer of women’s rights.

Our last speaker on the day was Nyan Thit Tieu who spoke about the aims of the Illawarra Interfaith Women’s Network, which are to bring together women of different religious faiths who are committed to promoting harmony, understanding and respect within their community.



Virginia Keft-Kennedy dancing

Thit spoke of the need for us to have faith, which really has little to do with religion. Faith has to live within ourselves if we want to promote respect and harmony in our communities.

What a special International Women’s Day. We celebrate the strength and resilience of women, we listened to spirited women, we tasted foods from many lands, and we watched with envy as women wearing exciting clothes and beads moved hips and bottoms in ways that some of us could never do. Viva IWD!

Barbara Malcolm





Aboriginal Support Circle Issues

Closing the Gap

On December 20, 2007 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to a partnership between all levels of government to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities to achieve the target of closing the gap in Indigenous disadvantage.

On March 20, 2008 the Prime Minister and other key Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders signed a Statement of Intent to work together to achieve equality in health status and life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Indigenous Australians by 2030.

On November 29 2008, COAG agreed to an historic \$1.6 billion National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes to specifically close the gap in life expectancy within a generation.

Two international studies released recently on the Closing the Gap Clearinghouse website,

which provides information on what works in addressing Indigenous disadvantage, found that programs with a high level of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ownership and support are the most effective in promoting social and emotional wellbeing.

Indigenous people who speak their own language have better resilience and mental health than those who don't. These are just two of the main findings. The Closing the Gap Clearinghouse is delivered by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) and the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

It has been found that programs that do not address past trauma, racism, poverty and homelessness are not as effective as those that promote emotional wellbeing. In the field of psychological distress and suicides, the Indigenous hip hop program run by the BeyondBlue organisation, which incorporated traditional culture fused with hip hop, rap, beat boxing and break dancing, resulted in increased

self-esteem, preparedness to talk to family and friends about mental health, and the ability to see signs of depression in others.

Motivating people to self-manage and solve their own problems step-by-step were shown to improve wellbeing in Indigenous people with a mental illness in remote communities. The studies can be found at www.aihw.gov.au/closingthegap

Pat Zinn



V-Day Celebrated

V-Day is a global activist movement held on the 14th February each year to end violence against women and girls. It raises funds and awareness through benefit productions of playwright/founder Eve Ensler's award-winning play *The Vagina Monologues*.

The V stands for Victory, Valentine and Vagina. To date, the V-Day movement has raised over \$90 million and educated millions about the issue of violence against women and the



efforts to end it. It has funded over 14,000 community-based anti-violence programs and safe houses in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Kenya, South Dakota, Egypt and Iraq.



National Indigenous Cancer Network Launched

NICaN was launched on World Cancer Day, February 4, at the offices of the Cancer Council Australia in Sydney. It is a huge step forward towards closing the gap on Indigenous cancer mortality rates. NICaN is about making sure that research about cancer in Indigenous Australians is available for use by patients, their families, practitioners, policy makers and researchers.

The 2013 WCD theme is “dispelling damaging myths and misconceptions about cancer” which is particularly relevant given the lack of open discussion and general awareness about cancer in Indigenous communities.

Pat Zinn



Wonnarna Man Fronts Seniors Week

James Wilson-Miller, a Wonnarna man from the Hunter River area, is the face of this year’s NSW Seniors Week.

James is an author and teacher and has been curator of Koori history, culture and design at the Powerhouse Museum for the past 17 years. This 64-year-old has a Centenary of Federation Medal for his contributions to Aboriginal issues and is the author of *Koori: a Will to Win*.

He is the first Indigenous person to front Seniors Week in NSW. Steve Widders of Armidale and Auntie Ruth Simms of Nowra are also Seniors Week ambassadors in NSW. Congratulations!

Pat Zinn



Heritage Listed Trail

Bundian Way is an ancient track linking Bilgalera (Fisheries Beach, in Twofold Bay, Eden) with Targangal (Mount Kosciuszko). It is hoped that

this magnificent track will be officially opened later this year. Once it was part of a network of routes used by Aboriginal people over thousands of years between different parts of the coast, tablelands, Snowy Mountains and beyond.

It was a route connecting whaling ceremonies in spring and gathering Bogong moths in autumn. They then shared knowledge of these routes with early settlers, which enabled pastoral development of the wider region. While many of the old routes now have major roads along parts of them, the landscape is largely unchanged.

Yuin Elder, Rev Ossie Cruze, says the track has been named after the “Bundi” people who once lived along the route. It took considerable research over many years by Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council member John Blay to rediscover the exact route. It is now heritage listed.

The first infrastructure project to be erected is the Bundian Way Art Gallery at Delegate, the only Indigenous art gallery in the region. It is hoped it will boost the region’s economy, create jobs for Aboriginal people and revitalise local Aboriginal culture.

Pat Zinn



Older women don't stop working, writing, reading, thinking or simply enjoying life just because they are older

The Joy of Gardening

The hard work involved in creating and maintaining a garden is undeniable but the rewards are definitely worth it. This is evident in the Miller's Point Community Garden behind the Older Women's Network.

On what was originally a waste dump, local resident and OWN member, Jane Barwell, has created a small miracle. OWN volunteers now overlook a thriving vegetable and flower garden and there is always a vase of flowers on the table at No. 87. The garden is exclusively for women who must be members of OWN.

Jane, who works in the garden most days, would like to thank Beth Eldridge, who applied for the grant from FaCSHIA, Elissa Buttsworth, for the push mower and the stonemason who brought in sandstone, and also enthusiastic encouragement from OWN.

The benefits for Jane:

- She loves it!
- Her health has improved as she is eating fresh food from the garden.
- Pushing, bending and lifting is great exercise
- She has been feeding the neighbourhood with tomatoes and purple beans
- The garden has brought birds, lizards and ladybirds to the area
- There is a compost heap

To sum up, Jane loves it and so do OWN members.

June West



Jane loves working in her garden

It's About Time

Time is a big issue for older people. Who of us knows how much time we have left to spend, to waste, to enjoy?

Many retirees 'spend' their time living life to the max going to fitness classes, volunteering, babysitting, walking, reading, playing mahjong or bridge. We enjoy hobbies, writing, gardening, discussion groups, lectures and meetings! We certainly don't like spending time in doctors' 'wasting rooms'.

I didn't buy a watch till I retired, because it was only then that I found I needed one.

My big gripe is about Daylight Saving Time. It doesn't mean it is time to save daylight, because the length of daylight hours is decided by the earth's rotation. It doesn't mean that daylight saves time, because that is not feasible. And can you really save

time? You might 'spend' less time, but can you 'save' time and store it somehow, to spend later?

I think Daylight Saving Time is Daylight Stealing Time, because I am a morning person. Just when I am beginning to really enjoy those early mornings of daylight, they are stolen from me and given to those who are evening people. Not fair! I would enjoy warm evenings in midsummer regardless of the time on a clock.

Lorraine Inglis



Honouring a Great Feminist

Because *We're Women* by Joyce Stevens was first published in 1975 in a Women's Liberation International Women's Day Broadsheet - then in her 1985 book, *A History of International Women's Day* in words and images. The words have been republished on postcards, stickers, posters and T-shirts in Australia and overseas.

In 1996, Joyce Stevens received an Order of Australia (AM) for "service to social justice for women as an activist and writer".

Joyce is a very old and dear friend of mine, now suffering from dementia and in a nursing home.

It would be great to acknowledge her contribution to the women's movement in Sydney by re-printing her poem in OWN Matters.

Sonia Laverty



Because We're Women

By Joyce Stevens

Because our work is never done
and under or unpaid or boring or
repetitious,
And we're the first to get the sack,
And what we look like is more important than
what we do,
And if we get raped it's our fault,
And if we get bashed we must have provoked it,
And if we raise our voices we're nagging bitches,
And if we enjoy sex we're nymphos,
And if we don't we're frigid,
And if we love women it's because we can't get a
real man,
And if we ask our doctor too many questions
we're neurotic and/or pushy,
And if we expect community care for children
we're selfish,
And if we stand up for our rights we're
aggressive and unfeminine,
And if we don't we're typical weak females,
And if we want to get married we're out to trap
a man,
And if don't we're unnatural,
And because we still can't get an adequate safe
contraceptive but men can walk on the moon,
And if we can't cope or don't want a pregnancy
we're made to feel guilty about abortion,
And for lots and lots of other reasons,
we are part of the Women's Liberation
Movement.

Whether we get in touch by writing a letter, getting online or using a smart phone, we need to evaluate how to do it to our best advantage

Lies, Lies and Urban Myths

Have you ever received an email from someone alerting you to some catastrophe that has happened or is about to happen unless you ACT NOW! And asking you to forward it on to everyone in your email address book? One arrived in my inbox only last week with a big warning in red...

A dangerous new spider RED CROSS warning – Watch out for this spider – Please don't delete... forward to everyone you know! (Then followed a long rave about how this 'new' spider looks just like a Huntsman, but it is not harmless – this one kills!)

Of course when I looked it up on Snopes, the urban myth site, I found that it was complete rubbish and, as you can imagine, the Red Cross is not happy with having its name associated with it.

The problem is that people receiving these emails often forward them on to friends in their address book without first checking their authenticity. I always check with Snopes first, and if it's not there I check some other sites (see below). If it's a hoax I email the person who sent it to me and also cc everyone else they have sent it to. Sometimes the sender emails me back to say thanks, but mostly there's an embarrassed silence.

I've received emails about refugees and asylum seekers in Australia supposedly receiving huge amounts of government financial support (a lie); warnings about horrific crimes perpetrated against 'real' people (urban myths); dangerous computer

viruses (lies) and many more. Some of them are plausible enough to be believed, but do a little detective work and find out for yourself BEFORE hitting the forward button. Check if it's a hoax, a rumour, or an urban legend by going to any of the following sites.

- Snopes
- Factcheck.org
- UrbanLegends.about.com
- TruthorFiction.com
- Common misconceptions (Wikipedia)
- Fact checker (Wikipedia)
- MythBusters (Wikipedia)
- Newsbusters (Wikipedia)
- PolitiFact.com (Wikipedia)
- The Skeptic's Dictionary (Wikipedia)
- The Straight Dope (Wikipedia)

A WARNING: When you go to these sites the content is sometimes so astonishing you can get trapped for hours being entertained and horrified in about equal amounts. Trust me, I know...

Dorothy Cora



Instant communications

Before the advent of instant and constant communications with smart phones, iPads, and the simpler mobile phone, how we communicated was a more polite and reliable system. Now we talk incessantly to each other with messages and texts about the simplest and smallest item.

It seems to me that we have become less resourceful

rather than more resourceful. When friends and families arranged to meet at a particular time and at a particular place we arrived more or less on time, without dependence upon the electronic medium.

If we were late, we simply waited. Once I planned to meet a friend at the NSW Art Gallery and I was one hour and a half late due to track work on one of the major train lines. My friend was calmly sitting on the steps waiting for me. There was no way we could contact each other, and yet we still met and enjoyed the exhibition and each other's company. When I apologised for my lateness she responded by saying that she knew I wouldn't have stood her up. And right she was.

Now we have very high expectations of each other and our phones, which increasingly fail in their functions and drive us to distraction. We are less inclined to be patient with our friends and family and our frustration with each other when we can't keep up with the latest technology causes us to be less considerate of each other.

Conversations heard on public transport can be of a rather private nature at times. I don't want to hear inane private chat between what happened to her or him when they are about to see each other within the next half hour. 'I'm on the bus at ...'

I despair about courteous, polite and worthy discussions between adults these days. Whatever happened to a chat on a landline? You don't have to make it short as you do on a mobile because of its exorbitant cost. We have become like trained monkeys with these 'essential' items.



Are Smart phones the answer or the problem?

Less and less consideration is paid to how we speak. I really get irritated with new-speak where the letter R is considered English language. 'R U coming?' I don't want to be trendy any longer. How often have you wanted to throw your mobile into the bush, or the water, or over a fence, or dance on the thing and break it up into pieces?

How many of us still hand-write letters to friends and family? What a treasure it is to have a tactile memory of our friendship. And you can keep them for the future when our present hectic life has ended. Letters seem like archival stuff, but emails? I hunger for the simple life, and I think it is time I headed for the hills and raced to get away from this constant, instant life.

Glenys Buselli



Not only Australian women, but women of all nations, can say: "We aren't there yet."

Ageism takes toll on working women and productivity

Despite legislation outlawing age and gender related discrimination, a senior researcher at the University of Sydney Business School said that a combination of ageism and sexism is continuing to act as a barrier to older women who want to work.

Associate Professor Leanne Cutcher delivered an address at an Older Women's Network International Women's Day Festival of Ideas on Friday March 8. Dr Cutcher said that current attitudes towards life and career cycles still dominate most workplaces and work to exclude older women from the labour market. Dr Cutcher pointed out that only three per cent of companies listed on the ASX200 are headed by women over the age of 55.

"Age norms dictate appropriate times and ages for particular achievements, roles or transitions in life, such as leaving home, entering the workforce, getting married, becoming a parent and retiring," Dr Cutcher told members of the Older Women's Network.

"When people do not conform in line with these age norms they are sanctioned. I believe that while ageism also affects men, it is especially corrosive for women who experience age discrimination at a younger age and are seen as 'older' at an earlier age. Efforts by Australian women to hide their age underpin the country's booming cosmetics market."

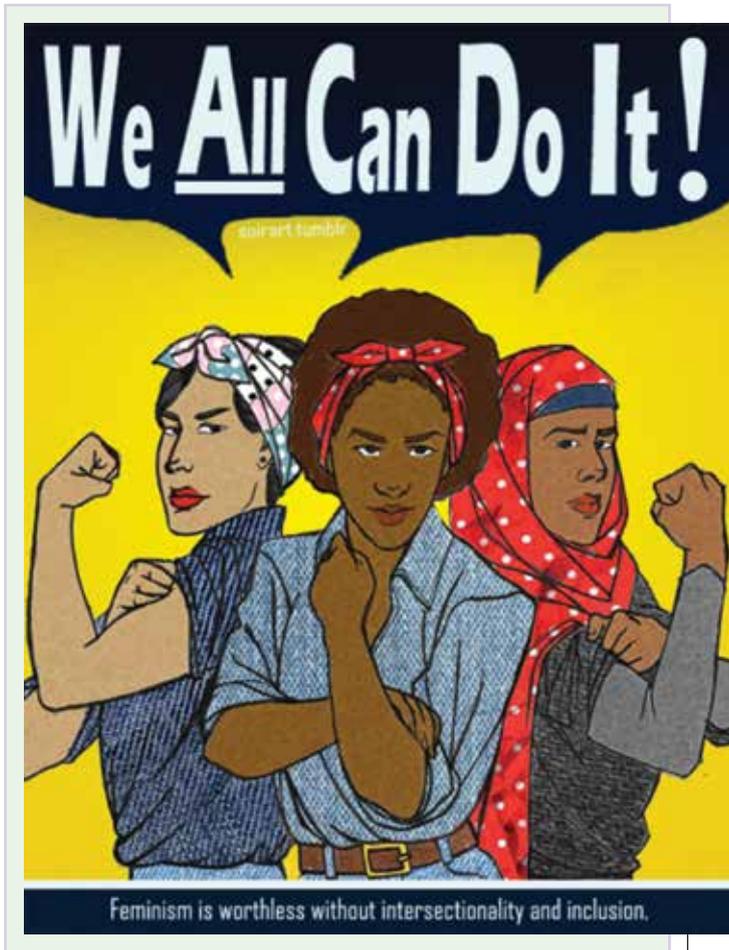


Understanding Gender Inequality and the Influence of Feminism in Women's NGOs: A Global Study

The motivation to conduct this research arose primarily from a disquiet I had been feeling for some time about the failure of feminism, after 40 years of influence at global, national and local levels, to bring about a marked improvement in women's equality when viewed from a world wide perspective.

The survey was aimed at building knowledge about how gender equality is understood at a national level, based on the perceptions and understanding of the 282 women's NGO representatives, from every region in the world, who generously responded to the survey. The results provide a rich data set that, although not yet fully analysed, show a range of tensions between what it is the NGOs do, what they think needs to change, what they think are good indicators of change to bring about gender equality.

The project also explored the dominance of 'empowerment' as a framework for policy and practice in a very wide range of women's services that seek to contribute to women's equality. This meant that a key theoretical discussion informing this study was about what empowerment means and how it is applied in practice. From a feminist perspective, the idea or philosophy of empowerment must be questioned. Has empowerment been so successful because it suits the individualisation processes of neo-liberalism and market capitalism? Why is it that minute shifts



towards better conditions and status of women, despite their ongoing inequality, are seen as gender equality measures at all? Are they not simply a change in the type of inequality women experience or might experience in the future?

A second key debate within the research is about how different theories of feminism have affected and determined (to some extent at least) both the goals and mechanisms applied in attempts to achieve gender equality. There were direct questions in the survey seeking to gain a sense of how feminism frames practices and is applied in the contemporary women's NGO sector. The results of the survey are complex but illuminating. One key question revealed that most women's NGOs see women's structural change as

crucial, where strong national government leadership on gender equality, gender equality education programs, strong laws against sexual assault and domestic violence, and a visible and vocal women's movement are the best ways of achieving gender equality. These strategies are in contrast to the evidently dominant programs of individualised empowerment that pervade the institutionally and government funded programs for gender equality.

Overall, the data from the 16 questions and the additional qualitative information provided through the survey show tensions between the ideas for what needs to be done and what best measures gender equality and the types of feminist frameworks that seem to have been adopted.

A broad analysis suggests a failure in the ideas of 'gender' over the ideas of feminism – which, in its many forms, aims to change the whole of society's perceptions and the social and economic status of women, rather than just changing women's ideas/sense of who they are as individuals. The survey results also suggest a tyranny inherent in 'empowerment' approaches as it could be seen as a convenience that fits the dominant a neo-liberal or market oriented view of the world.

As I work through the results in more detail, the aim is to find ways that it contributes to the answer to the question of why has there been so little world-wide gain in achieving gender equality.

Ruth Phillips
Faculty of Education & Social Work
The University of Sydney



Older women are good at it all: entertaining and acting, caring and loving or just plain grumping

Those Dames

The 28th Illawarra Folk Festival held in January attracted International, national and local artists which transformed the 11 venues in the Bulli Showground into a cultural and harmonious village.

350 events were held over the four days of the Festival. You could learn how to Bush Dance, Bollywood, Belly Dance, Morris, Celtic and more or just sway and dance at the Saturday World music dance, or just dress up for the Sunday Parade. There are no video or computer games but lots of dancing, storytelling, puppets, instrument making playing and singing in a packed four days of fun and action-packed singing.

The evening was very hot as the air-conditioning wasn't working, but the Sutherland Dames attracted a good audience who enjoyed our 'OWN' words and presentation so much so that we were invited back again next year to share the stage and venue with artists from around the globe.

Our next performance is at the Engadine High School's Senior Student Concert, combining

the Illawarra Older Women's Network Wellness Centre and the Senior Students Concert with a lunch. Invitations have gone into the community and the local radio for a good audience for this concert to celebrate Seniors Week.

DAME Josephine Allon



For What It's worth

Language does evolve and change. My father said "Toodle pip!" and I said "See you later." A couple of expressions – "Have a nice day!" and "Enjoy!" – must be in the training manual for those working in cafes and supermarkets. They really bug me. I often reply, "I'll let you know."

Some phrases are used to fill space, have little meaning and are a waste of my time reading them. For instance, at the end of the day, at this moment in time, going forward, for what it's worth, I'm just saying ...

My pet hate is "Someone should..." for obvious reasons. Other expressions have lost their

impact, but are still overused, for instance, think outside the square, it's not rocket science, let's cut to the chase, paradigm shift, on the same page and 24/7. And some just annoy me: I personally, fairly unique, just kidding! Whatever! Absolutely! Same! Awesome.

I wrote this paragraph:
"At this moment in time I personally believe that someone should think outside the square; it's not rocket science. I'm just saying, for what it's worth, we need a paradigm shift. Let's cut to the chase. Going forward, in this fairly unique situation, by working 24/7 the results could be absolutely awesome."

This is not a cryptic crossword, but I challenge you to write what the paragraph says in one sentence of about six words.

Lorraine Inglis



Beloved Pip

My beloved cat Pip would have been 13 years old had he lived until spring. He was five months old

© Michael Jastremski (Philadelphia)

when I bought him from the Cat Protection Society (CPS) but Pip introduced himself to me prior to that, when he and his brother used to play in the trees in my back garden.

Their owners, who lived a few doors away, had no idea of their sex and nor did they care. Apparently whenever the mother-in-law's cat had kittens she gave a couple to her son. They made it clear that they had no intention of having them neutered, so I notified the Cat Protection Society.

When the CPS officer arrived to collect the kittens they were playing in the tall trees in my back garden. On her way out, I found myself saying that if a home couldn't be found for the smaller kitten within two weeks, I would buy him back. You can probably guess; that is precisely what happened!

Although Pip was the shy one he bonded with me from the outset. However, he remained wary of visitors and would usually hide until they left.

At that time I still had my cat Lucky who was a gentle, timid female. Being male, Pip soon established the "pecking



It is always hard to say goodbye to our beloved pets

order" and separate sleeping arrangements became necessary. Lucky died in 2003.

I swear that Pip understood whatever I said to him! He loved to be groomed and I only had to say: "Do you want a brush?" when he would jump onto the garden table for me to groom him. Like all cats, Pip pleased himself first, but he was very

companionable and affectionate.

Sadly, I lost my Pip to cancer on 21 February last, after the vet had given me a week to come to terms with it. Daughter, Liz, accompanied me and we brought Pip home and buried him in the back garden where I first encountered him.

June West



Notices

Dying With Dignity AGM

Saturday, April 20, 2pm to 4.30pm. Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, 280 Pitt St. Speakers include:

- Dr Christopher Ryan will be talking about the attitude of doctors to assisted dying.
- Renee Goosens will be talking about pain management and end of life choices



Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts Mystery and Crime Reading Group

April 6: *Framed!* Crime fiction in which windows, doorways, paintings, photographs or mirrors play a role

May 4: *Not the usual suspects* – crime fact or fiction featuring eg archaeologist, doctor, plumber, geologist (professions or occupations other than police/lawyer/private investigator)

June 1: *Crime plus* – choose a crossover genre novel eg crime/fantasy, crime/horror, crime/espionage

June 29: *Calendar of crime* – centered around a season (eg winter), an equinox or a solstice

July 27: *Debut crime novel.*

August 24: *Colourful crime* – pick a novel with a colour in the title

September 21: *Far-flung crime.*

October 19: *Crime in a confined space* - a lift, a cell, the smallest room in the house – your choice!

November 16: *It's elementary!*
Crime fiction featuring earth, wind, fire or water in title or plot

December 7: Christmas Party.

Contact Group Co-ordinator:
Carole O'Brien - 9665 6639



Sydney University Lectures

April 9: *How China's Wartime Past is Shaping its Present- and Future.*
6-7:30pm. Law School Foyer, Eastern Avenue, University of Sydney. Cost: Free/Registration requested.

April 17: *Early Stuttering Intervention: Speaking is Living.*
6-7:30pm. Law School Foyer, Eastern Avenue, University of Sydney. Cost: Free - registration requested.

April 23: *The Voiceless Animal Law Lecture*, 6-8pm.
Venue: Lecture Theatre 101, The University of Sydney Law School, New Sydney Law School

Building (F10), Eastern Avenue, Camperdown Campus. Free.

May 15: *Public Art Today - from Space Invaders to Place-makers.* 6-7:30pm. Law School Foyer, Eastern Avenue, University of Sydney.
Cost: Free, register online at <http://bit.ly/11U1saW>



Special Events

APRIL

4th: Belvoir 'Cat on a Hot Tin Roof', 12pm.

11th: Archibald Prize, AGNSW, Thursday, 1.30pm.

24th: Salon de Refuses, S.H Ervin Gallery, 1pm.

MAY

16th: Belvoir Forget Me Not, 12pm.

20-26th: Sydney Writers' Festival.

27th-June 3: Reconciliation Week.



Politics in the Pub

Gaelic Club, Devonshire St

April 12: *Packer's Non-Tendered Barangaroo Casino - Las Vegas in the Pacific.*

MEMBERS & FRIENDS
WELCOME TO ATTEND
ALL OUR ACTIVITIES

Wellness on Wednesdays

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

Lost Ladies

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

Film Discussion Group

You are invited on **Tues April 19** to see *The Loneliest Planet*. Recommended: *The Performance*. Contact Yetty on 9665 2050 for more information.

Bondi Junction Coffee and Gossip Group

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

Book Club

MON, APR 15 - 12.30pm at 87 Lower Fort St. *By The Book* by Romona Kaval. MON, MAY 20 - 12.30pm at 87 Lower Fort St. *Wolf Hall* by Hilary Mantel.

Aboriginal Support Circle

The next meeting for 2013 is April 9 at the Gardener's Lodge Cafe, Victoria Park. Confirm details with Pat Zinn 9389 1090 or email patzinn@hotmail.com

Saturday Social Group at Birkenhead Point

Birkenhead Café, 1st floor Birkenhead Shopping Complex. Contact Bev Cameron on 9957 5367 or Meg Venning on 9887 2386.

- John Kaye, NSW Greens
- Dr Wendy Lang, Senior Pastor, Surry Hills Baptist Centre.

April 19: Combating Bullying in Schools, Universities and Workshops

- Vaughan Bowie Adjunct Fellow, UWS
- Ken Marslaw, "Enough is Enough" Organisation.

April 26: US/Australia Relations - Imperialism in East Asia

- Dr Erik Paul, Research Fellow and VP CPACS
- Dr Ken McNab President, Centre Peace and Conflict Studies, Sydney University.

May 3: Privatisation of Government Assets - Is There Anything Left to Sell?

- Joe Nagy, Finance and Economic Coach
- Phillip Toner Senior Research Fellow, Senior Research Fellow, Sydney University.

May 10: Venezuela- A New Democracy or a Command Capitalist State?

Frederico Fuentes, author Latin American Transitions
Rodrigo Acuna, PhD candidate Latin American American Affairs.



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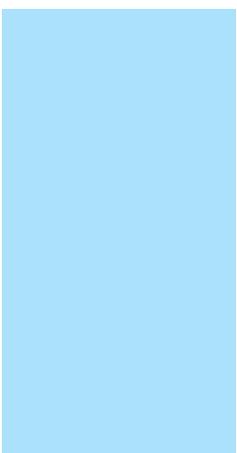
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