

OWN MATTERS



Older Women Vote. Response From The Chair. What's The Deal?

Join The 21st Century. Tech Savvy DVDs. Farewell Grande Dame.

They Got Things Done. More Than One Way. Witch Girl.

Work Beyond 65. Dressing Up. Happy Toilet. Mixed Messages.



Breast screen extended

Relief after Government extends mammograms to women aged 70 to 74 in budget announcement



Rita closes curtain on role

Theatre group coordinator Rita Tratt steps down after three years of leading the cast and crew



Following the dress up rules

Do clothes make the woman? Just how important is wearing the 'right' outfit, or is it just a measure of status?



Farewell to Grande Dame

Friends and family gather in Katoomba to remember proud feminist and OWN member, Wendy Kerr



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

ABN: 36 992 030 904



CONTENTS

FEATURES

Older Women Vote	3
Joining 21st Century	10
What's The Deal?	10
Tech Savvy DVDs	11
Farewell Grande Dame	12
They Got Things Done	13
Witch Girl	14
Work Beyond 65	15
Dressing Up	16
More Than One Way	17
Mixed Messages	17
Happy Toilets	17
EVERY MONTH	
Letters	4-5
Beyond the Rocks	6-7
Aboriginal Issues	8-9
Notices	18-19
Activities	19

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

Editorial Team

June West, Lorraine Inglis, Anna Logan and Fran Weston.

Guest Editor: Dorothy Cora

Admin Support

Elissa Buttsworth, Margaret Holland, Margaret Kearney, Merrill Woods and Beth Eldridge.

Layout and Design

Michelle Davies

Mishy Dee Creative Designs

Membership & Subscriptions

Merril Woods and Chris Taylor

Mailout Team

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

More help always welcome!

OWN Office

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

Produced with the assistance of the Australian Government through Ageing Disability and Home Care, Department of Family and Community Services NSW, with project funding from the NSW Department of Health, and assistance from the City of Sydney.

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.*

OWN Matters is copyright. Material can be reproduced, but only with acknowledgement of its source.

Older women are becoming a more significant proportion of the population. How can we use our voting power?

Older women vote!

OWN has long advocated for changing the cut off age of 69 years for a woman to have a breast screen.

One in eleven women develops breast cancer. The implication that the danger of this happening stopped at 69 was always ridiculous. The policy has always been highly insulting. It implied that older women weren't important. They didn't add anything to the economy once they were retired, so it helped the budget by not reminding them about their mammogram. After all, each woman not having a breast screen saved money.

But now older women make up a bigger proportion of the population and will increasingly do so. This means they will become a more significant voting block. And not only older women! They are mothers and grandmothers of the next big increase in the general population. Another significant voting block!

The recent announcement that free mammograms will now be



available to older women is not really surprising, and I can't see the Opposition objecting.

Curiously, the announcement was made on Mothers' Day, the day on which many women, and their daughters, take part in the fun run to raise money for breast cancer research. A very touchy, feely day on which to make such an announcement!

In Tuesday's budget, the Australian Government will contribute an extra \$55.7 million to invite more women to undergo mammography, announced Health Minister Tanya Plibersek. The free service is currently only available to women aged 50 to 69, but over the next four years

women aged between 70 and 74 will be eligible for the free screen.

Expanding the age range by five years will mean an extra 70,000 women will be invited every year to have a mammogram," Ms Plibersek said. We expect to find an extra 600 cancers every year. Cancers that are detected with a mammogram are much smaller and often are able to be treated with breast preserving surgery.

I think it's time for us to take advantage of what this announcement indicates – we are an increasingly significant part of the voting public! It might be time for us to push for other measures we think are important. For me, it's voluntary euthanasia. What would you push for?

Lorraine Inglis

.....

Response from the Chair

Extension of the Breast Screening program for women over 69 years has been a key objective of OWN NSW over recent years with several representations made to Minister Plibersek and to the Human Rights Commission. Obviously the high incidence of breast cancer among women over the age of 69 is of concern to many others as well. OWN NSW will be among those to congratulate the Minister.

*Sonia Laverty, Chair,
OWN NSW Management Team*

Letters

Changing our name

I believe the time has come to change our name, and the Network of Women (NOW), sounds good to me.

I have often had adverse reactions from men and women when I talk about the Older Women's Network, not about what we do which they usually admire, but because of the name. Sometimes they mishear and think it is the Old Women's Network! Indeed one woman said that she would never join an organisation with a name like that.

NOW sounds positive and forward-thinking. We are always looking for younger women to join us and, it seems to me, something called the Network of Women which includes women of all ages, is much more likely to get them to join up.

Halcyon Evans



Panthers Appreciation

Just a note of appreciation from your friend on the other side of the "pond" and the Gray Panthers. I am on your email list

and really enjoy hearing about all your activities. Gray Panthers is on your same path! We fight against ageism, sexism and racism. The only difference is that we include men! Our priorities include health care, Social Security, the environment and peace. Keep up your good work!

Judy Lear,

National Chair, Gray Panthers



How to interpret Older?

Older is a word and it is how we each interpret the word that makes it as different and as interesting as the women we are. Think about it. What is your interpretation? It is how you feel about yourself and your right to choose whether you think of yourself as older.

I love being part of OWN because I am seventy four years old and love being older. I believe we should retain the name, Older Women's Network, as it is a symbol of all OWN stands for. Older women who are "breaking new ground" in society. OWN is at the forefront of it all.

Rita Walker, Illawarra OWN



Me Oh My, It's Dry July

Those of you who know me well know that one of my gifts to myself is a wee glass of port before bed. At the end of a busy day, my few minutes reading and sipping my port are my most looked forward to moments.

So it is with a feeling of martyrdom I am going the Dry July route this year to raise money for Cancer Support. Hopefully my money will go towards the Cancer Care Services who are planning wellness clinics, using the OWN Wellness Centres model to do so at Liverpool and Camden Hospitals.

We are rightfully proud of our wellness centres and prouder still that the hospitals that look after cancer patients looked at what we are doing as they planned these centres.

These centres will support women who are recovering from cancer treatments and slowly returning to a state of good health. Many of us have been down that road and will know how hard it is to get to the stage where you feel ready to take on

life's challenges again. I'm asking all my OWN friends to support me. There are thirty-one dry days in July. So if you or your group can donate one pound eleven shillings, that's a shilling for every day. I, and the Cancer Support team, would most grateful.

If you haven't got one pound eleven shillings, three dollars ten will do.

Barbara Malcolm



Prescription Instructions

The practice of doctors and pharmacists to simply put "Take as prescribed" or "Use as directed by doctor" is lazy and quite dangerous as people might forget what the doctor said or if someone else has to take responsibility for the medications they might not know what the instructions were.

Another thing that I think is bad is that pharmacists put their label over printed information on the packet, which is sometimes important, rather than on the blank spot generally left for the pharmacist's label.

Robyn Smith



A brief note to say how improved OWN Matters is. Much easier to read and I pass it on to neighbours. I am now an inactive OWN member but enjoy the various issues in this booklet.

"Beloved Pip" (April 2013) particularly resonated with me as we had said goodbye to our 19 year old cat, Nelson, in March, and he is now buried beside the camellia tree. Today we planted daffodil bulbs on his grave and will await the outcome in Spring.

Lola Sharp



Where are the women?

During the Vietnam war there was Save Our Sons, but now with all the horror of Afghanistan and other places of conflict where are the women?

Are women demonstrating, and is it being censored out by the media? Have we become immune to killing? It sometimes seems to me that OWN has lost some of its punch in recent years and become accepting of the status quo!

June Goss



Thank you

Contact from Peg Hewitt recently, and a copy of the "Portrait of Noreen Hewitt" brought memories of a gracious, feisty older woman. Noreen was a wonderful woman role model for me. I learned so much from her. She has shown me it is OK to be strong and assertive as I grew older.

I do wonder if younger women appreciate that many of the choices they enjoy today are due to this woman and others she influenced. Such an amazing woman for her generation! Thank you Peg and Dorothy Cora.

Nancy Brown



Shower mat scum!

An occupational therapist I'm consulting told me that people are often not aware that shower mats should be replaced at least annually.

When I checked mine, I realised immediately the "suck" had gone out of the suction cups. I certainly hadn't noticed the mat moving under my feet, but decided it was time to replace it, following that advice. So keep your mats free of scum, and replaced regularly, for a safe shower.

Anna Logan



At and Beyond the Rocks

Hats OFF, Hats ON

On Tuesday, April 23, a big changeover occurred in the history of the 25 year old OWN Theatre Group - a changeover of coordinators. After nearly 3 years, Rita Tratt relinquished her hat and her responsibilities.

The coordinator role is vital to the health and welfare of Theatre Group members. She interfaces with community organisations, the NSW Management Team of which we are a project, Sydney City Council, Government departments and conference organisers. She also liaises with the TG Director, and plays a balancing act with personalities of great diversity.

On her retirement from the role, members eulogised Rita, reflected in the poem on this page. Summing up, Rita is always a compassionate listener, a persuasive, positive leader... and thoroughly enjoys a good party.

Taking up the coordinator's hat is



Rita Tratt stepped down as Theatre group coordinator

Ruth Thompson who joined the Theatre Group in 2011. Members know Ruth as tough – she came to rehearsals despite a smashed hand. She has computer skills of a high standard and she can be side-splittingly comic when thrown in at the deep end of

programs. Ruth is a determined rower in dragon boat weekly races and has studied building construction. She usually zooms into rehearsals on her motorised bike.

Joan Modder



Our Rita

by Ilona Lee

There once was a woman named Rita
As a leader t'will be hard to beat her
She kept us in line
All of the time
No wonder we'll hate to unseat her.

When Rita took over as leader
She thought that we wouldn't need her
For more than a year
But it was soon clear
That no one thought they could
succeed her.

She's a blonde and you know what
they say
Ditzy, not smart as a day
But Rita's no fool
She's smart and nice too
We'll need her for many a day.

We'll miss the way that she leads us
Charming but always with no fuss
Ruth, you've got a hard task
But a tip (if you ask)
The way to our hearts is to feed us.

Hastings OWN

Some information about what is happening in our group. Christmas 2012: We had an enjoyable Christmas lunch at Bago Tavern, Wauchope, a bit out from Port Macquarie. Their bus collected us, and we had nice company and good food.

Hastings Headway is the local charity we support. It is for people with Acquired Brain Injury. We donate change and any other donations we can.

We chose a small charity to support as sometimes they fly under the radar when everyone is out there after the charity dollar. We had a nice lunch with the clients and staff at Christmas.

Hastings' members: We lost one of our lovely ladies, Shirley, who moved back to Sydney, although another of our great ladies, Barbara, has returned to our group from Sydney. Pam had a shoulder replacement in March, but is now is back on the computer doing my newsletters. We have had a few members not well and a couple of members selling homes and relocating.

Although we are a small group our members regularly attend meetings and participate in our morning teas and outings. Thank you OWN NSW staff and volunteers for a job well done.

Pam Kenyon
Coordinator Hastings OWN



Spruiking OWN

A new Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual and Intersex consultative group came together with the assistance of staff from the City of Sydney to organise the first ever event during Seniors Week this year, with a focus on celebrating ourselves.

Working in conjunction with festival specialist Festivalists, we ensured we screened a film covering themes that reflected our lives.

Down at the Dendy Quay on Thursday, 21 March, there were stalls from various organisations set up in the foyer. Among them was the OWN stand ably staffed by Beth and Uma who had not



Uma Kali Shakti spruiking OWN!

only worked hard to put OWN leaflets and information in the show bags given to attendees, but also helped give a warm welcome to everyone, spruiking OWN and all our activities.

And what a lovely afternoon it turned out to be as Olympia Dukakis and Brenda Fricker delighted everyone in *Cloudburst*. This irreverent comedy is a life-affirming celebration of love in all its forms. The place was packed, and making it an even more special event were the free nibbles and drinks offered by Festivalists to filmgoers.

With the whole event such a great success, no doubt there will be more activities during future Seniors Weeks. If you were unlucky enough to miss such a terrific movie you'll be happy to know that *Cloudburst* is now available on DVD.

Uma Kali Shakti





Aboriginal Support Circle Issues

A Constitutional Convention or Summit Proposed

In a submission to the Joint Select Committee on the Constitutional Recognition of Indigenous Australians, the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples has called for a constitutional convention or summit to generate awareness and community support for a successful referendum. It has also called on the Committee to ensure that a timetable is outlined before the September election to ensure that continuity and momentum remain after the election.

Opposition leader Tony Abbott has indicated that if his government is elected, he would hold a referendum within the 2-year time frame.

The Select Committee has been tasked with building a secure, strong multi-partisan parliamentary consensus around the timing, specific content and the wording of a referendum.

This is vitally important, as the referendum must not fail.

Pat Zinn



Closing the Gap

The Federal Government has announced that it would contribute \$777 million over 3 years towards a renewed Indigenous health funding deal and has urged the States and Territories to chip in.

The \$1.6 billion dollars contributed under the previous agreement has already reaped "demonstrable benefits" according to Close the Gap campaign co-chair Mick Gooda. Improving Aboriginal health is not a quick fix and requires a long-term commitment above party politics.

National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation spokesman Justin Mohamed is urging the momentum to be maintained, to build on the inroads the 150 Aboriginal

community-controlled health organisations are making in their communities.

He has stated that "Aboriginal comprehensive primary health care provided by Aboriginal communities is the key to making a difference to Aboriginal health outcomes."

The success of the coming referendum to recognise Australia's First Peoples will also contribute to improving Indigenous health. Recognising one's own value and worth as a first class citizen is vital. It has the capacity to transform how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders identify and perceive themselves, which will empower them to take responsibility for their own health.



New Approach to Aboriginal Language Education

NSW Aboriginal Affairs minister Victor Dominello is



proposing a strategic and coordinated approach to Aboriginal languages and education by means of a whole-of-community approach.

Five languages have been nominated to be taught in their regions - Wiradjuri, Paakantji, Gamilaraay, Gumbaynggir and Bundjalung. Structured pay and employment conditions will make it possible to plan school and community education.

Up until now, people have invested enormous effort to keep language programs operating with little or no pay for their skills and commitment.

Pat Zinn



Custody Notification Service Ceases

Indigenous people who are arrested in NSW will no longer have access to the Aboriginal Legal Service 24-hour custody notification service (CNS).

This service, which came

into existence in 2007, was recommended by the 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and since it has been in place there have been no Aboriginal deaths in police cells in NSW.

At present, Aboriginal people arrested in NSW have access to a solicitor at any time, day or night. This is not just a legal service. Solicitors are trained in great depth about dealing with Aboriginal people in stressful situations.

Not only do they assist the person who has been arrested, they also give them a friendly ear and legal advice, as well as enquiring about their medical welfare, as few arrested people will tell a police officer about medical problems. A person with diabetes might go into a coma without the police being aware that this is life-threatening.

Solicitors are also able to get people out on bail and there is also a much better chance of negotiating with police than with a person taken into custody.

Costs are in the region of \$500,000 per year but in 2012 the Commonwealth Government, which has been granting the funds, has said it is a state issue and so far there has been no movement from the NSW Government.

Strenuous efforts are being made to lobby the NSW Government and it is to be hoped that this essential service will carry on.

Pat Zinn



ASC Birthday Celebration

Aboriginal Support Circle invites OWN members to their 20th Birthday Celebration on Thursday, 8th August, at Mott Hall.

RSVP by 15th July 2013 to: Pat Zinn 9383 1090 or Cate Turner 9428 2905.



“Come the Revolution”, has been our cry. Now we need to deal with smart phones, learning from DVDs, service providers, tablets. For older women it’s new, but we are out there in this digital revolution

Joining the 21st Century

As I excitedly opened the newly-delivered package containing my smartphone, purchased – oh so cleverly – at enormous savings over the internet, out tumbled several booklets, including the manual on which I must rely. Il n’est pas bon. Every word in French! No problem – just phone the supplier.

But it seems they can’t just send out the same booklet in English, they have to provide me with a link to a PDF file on my computer where I can download the English manual in 184 A4 pages, rather than their sending me the small 32-page booklet like the one I’m holding in my hand! Later Samsung provided this.

After consultation with my computer guru, I’ve purchased a Samsung Galaxy S3 and I bought it outright so that I’m not tied to any plans. My Internet service provider is TPG, and I was able to continue paying the same \$14.99 per month I paid with my old-style mobile phone. I understand that one of the benefits of my particular brand of smartphone is that when I go overseas I can remove the SIM card from it and buy one in England for about \$20, and thus be able to make and take calls with my European contacts, of course with a new phone number.

To set my phone up for use, and get a bit of basic training, I discovered I could go to the Samsung Store in town. I was impressed then, and have been since, at how all customers are treated equally, from my observation. Being elderly doesn’t mean you’re

dumb, and you’re not treated as though you are. The workers I’ve spoken to (and I’ve now been in about four times for short periods) have all been infinitely patient, and don’t seem to mind being asked the same question in many different ways!

With Samsung assistance I’ve now learned how to receive and send phone calls, emails and messages. With my first phone call, for some inexplicable reason I held the phone at waist level, and wondered why I couldn’t hear the caller! I also had to learn the exact direction to ‘swipe’ the screen in order to open an incoming call.

The customer support service gave me a wonderful piece of advice about transferring all my contact numbers to my new phone, after I was first told it couldn’t be done because the SIM cards were different sizes. I simply took my old phone into a mobile repair shop, where they removed the SIM card and cut it down to size. Then a Samsung store assistant inserted the now reduced SIM card into my phone, transferred all the contacts, and then replaced it with the new SIM card.

I’m like the turtle, slow and steady. I don’t need to win any race – I certainly don’t need to play any games - but I am hoping I can become proficient in the basics before I go overseas.

Anna Logan



What’s the deal?

I recently took out a mobile phone contract with Telstra. Some weeks later I received a

Those feisty women who went before us, they showed us how. They got things done. Now it's up to us. The All About Women Festival encouraged us to be BOLD

Farewell 'Grande Dame' of Katoomba

Grande Dame was the fond and respectful term used by friends about Wendy Kerr, past OWN member, who died peacefully at home in Katoomba on 31 March, 2013. She was 85.

It was a women's funeral, sad but joyous, and a political one. Joe, her youngest son, recalled that feminism was at the heart of everything Wendy did. She was supportive of many organisations. Women from WILPF, the Greens, the local Women's Health Centre, Senator Lee Rhiannon and many other friends told of how she always carried pamphlets, sought donations for her causes and encouraged people to join.

I spoke on behalf of OWN: "Some of us are wearing purple white and green today for Wendy – the colours of the women's movement – because women's issues were one of Wendy's concerns."

I went on to say a little about Wendy as a fellow member of the Older Women's Network in Sydney. She tended to move homes until she found the welcome coolness and warm community of Katoomba. She made good connections wherever she lived and we kept in touch.

"I have known Wendy for nearly 35 years – first in women's liberation when she was part of a feisty group in Parramatta in the early '70s, and then later when Wendy was the bookkeeper when we both



A fond farewell to Wendy Kerr

worked in the Intervention Bookshop. In the late 1980s she became a member of the Older Women's Network, first in Sydney, then Canberra, and back to Sydney. She has always spoken warmly of the support she found in the Women's Health Centre here in Katoomba.

"But there were her other passions too. Her dedication to the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the environment, and the Greens – always concerned about the damage done by pollutants to our bodies and the planet.

"She and I travelled much the same cancer road – I chose traditional treatments, Wendy complementary therapies – and I think she had the

better quality of life. She always made us welcome, wherever she lived. She would lead us off to the ferry, the local health food shop, op shop, botanical garden, mountain path or the wonders of her own garden. Her capacious handbag was never short of a bandaid, small scissors, a fruit knife.

“On one occasion I happened to stay for lunch. A salad was on the menu and with a twinkle in her eye she said, “You’ll never know what you’ll find in that salad” – meaning all sorts of greenery from her garden. So to a strong woman, a good friend, Vale Wendy.”

Joy Ross



They got things done!

I don’t know if you have had a similar experience as I have had when talking with a group of friends. Someone begins to speak about a friend, sometimes no longer with us, and feelings erupt in a rush of a warm love and emotion.

When I was reading Dorothy Cora’s “Noreen Hewett: Portrait of a Grassroots Activist” I felt this rush of warm emotion. I was not that close to Noreen. I did know her as I had seen her at various OWN meetings and conferences, even at Theatre Group performances when I was a cast member.

There was something very calming about Noreen. She never seemed to get flustered or really angry, and could easily get to the core of whatever matter was under discussion. And like so many women, she got things done!

I have a flight of fancy I would like to share... Most of the famous women of the past would have been bored rigid with eternally polishing their haloes, flapping their wings and plucking on harp strings.

They would probably have demanded of whom ever was in charge that they be sent to a more exciting place. I can just imagine the horned person in charge of ‘the other place’ getting quite upset as another intelligent woman banged on his door demanding to be let in.

Centuries of wonderful women organising good conditions, proper accommodation, education to cover centuries of boredom, and turning that place into something of which to be proud. They probably talked him into stopping torture, getting rid of that disgusting fire and brimstone and eternal agony, because it was not the right thing to do.

I do not wish to offend or be sacrilegious, however, I can see our Noreen, with her gentle smile, at a meeting with the women: “Well, I think we can solve this problem in quite a simple way by...”

I do hope many more OWN members around Australia will read this tribute to Noreen and be inspired to carry on her work. I would like to congratulate Dorothy on the research she has done and the warmth of her feelings towards Noreen that comes through in her writing.

Do make a point of getting a copy for yourself. On the days you may be feeling a little out of sorts have a read about this ‘Grassroots Activist’ and I guarantee it will do you a world of good.

June Goss



*What are your goals? To have a good time?
To live the good life? To go with the Left?
To work beyond 65? Whatever turns you on!*

Witch Girl and the Push

I've just finished reading a compelling and very autobiographical social history of about 50 years of the Sydney milieu in the Sydney Push, then at the Council of Social Service of NSW (NCOSS), now in the bush.



Author Lyn Gain

Lyn Gain says, "I found the Sydney Push in 1962 when I was sixteen. This changed my life forever." She honed several 'vices' along the way, but was strongly influenced by the Sydney Libertarian philosophy around which much of the Push was posited. "Sydney Libertarians are leftwing and not to be confused with American libertarians who are far right." She particularly hated the hypocrisy then prevalent in Sydney society and felt that her "determination to have a good time and live the good life" was an acceptable goal.

Much of this section of Lyn's book covers those she gambled and drank with and who she "was on with". This latter activity led to her rejecting the Libertarian social theory that sexual jealousy should be repressed. She asserts that she tried to avoid men who were already "on" with someone else, but was as "jealous as a cat" herself when this wasn't reciprocated.

Though Germaine Greer preceded Lyn's days in the Push, they met when Germaine returned to Sydney for a period. Lyn was always buoyed by the memory of Germaine, who was probably impressed

with Lyn's intellectual incisiveness and wit, inviting her to London to do her typing, an invitation she refused at the time.

In 1976, Eva Cox became Director of NCOSS and tracked Lyn down to ask her to come for a six-week survey job. This stretched to 19 years, during which time I joined NCOSS as their accountant, and Lyn eventually became Director.

I particularly enjoyed reading this section of the book; it reminded me of the characters, events, and governments I followed with avid interest at the time.

Obviously Lyn's time in the Push prepared her well for the community services industry. She followed the Libertarian creed of critical enquiry and permanent protest. She had extraordinarily well-qualified casual workers at her fingertips. (One of the casual typists had a doctorate in astrophysics.) She hired or recruited priests, murderers (well, one that I know of), millionaires, polities and the homeless to her side.

To our amazement, nay horror, when Lyn retired, she and Hannes moved to Kalang, near Bellingen. NCOSS bought Lyn a goat, which I know is what she asked for, never mind what she says, but she turned out to be better with donkeys than goats.

Witch Girl makes a fascinating read. It is available from www.valentinepress.com.au for \$44.60. Or have your local library buy it. Tell Lyn I sent you!

Anna Logan



Work beyond 65? Yes, go for it!

I was in Singapore on International Labour Day, which is a national holiday and taken very seriously. Over 6,000 workers rallied to highlight issues around fair work practices and health and safety issues.

As in Australia, many Singaporeans want to work beyond 65 and the Prime Minister concurs that if they want to, they should be able to. Last year the Retirement and Re-employment Act came into effect. Employers must now offer re-employment to workers turning 62 (the previous retirement age) to at least 65. The type of work offered depends on the worker's health and the nature of their work.

Working part-time past 65 years is a very attractive option for many Singaporeans and the challenge now is for employers to accommodate this. Naturally, some people such as taxi drivers and hospital employees are already working past 65, and obviously the demand for labour governs the implementation of such schemes.

One heartening aspect was that the government, industry and unions are working to solve any problems and the Prime Minister wants to encourage more professionals, managers and executives to join unions.

Or, is this heartening? At a recent ACTU summit I attended on insecure work, there was some concern expressed in the mining industry that, as unionised foremen became managers, they in fact adopted a more managerial stance, particularly in some aspects of implementing occupational



A senior worker in Singapore

health and safety. The union membership in Singapore is highest amongst rank and file workers who make up two thirds of the workforce, and as these workers transition into management the Government is keen to have them join unions.

I don't understand the true relationship between the three players in the industrial relations sphere, but a desire for harmonious relations appears to be a feature of Singaporean life, judging by the posters to be kind and tolerant to each other.

Singapore certainly appears vibrant and upbeat with low unemployment, low taxation, affordable housing and racial harmony, but I'm not sure if people have any choice about the work they want to do, if they fall out of work. As our guide said "Singapore has 1.7% unemployment and they don't get benefits if they are lazy bums".

So in the country of the Lion and the Orchid I got the feeling that the Lion rules.
(The above is a summary of an article in *The Strait Times*, May 2, 2013.)

Rita Tratt



Seniors' needs are simple; finding work, getting a seat on a bus, getting our message across, dressing for the occasion, finding a public toilet, practicing safe sex. Pretty much the same as those of the young

Dressing Up

I'd bought a 'new' handbag at Vinnies, and we were discussing handbags. A fellow volunteer said, "I still have my mum's good leather black bag, but it only comes out for a funeral." Of course black is no longer essential for such occasions. The women in black, out strutting their stuff at night, or dressing for success in the office, show no sign of being "in mourning".

White is still the colour for brides. It was once meant to indicate virginity or purity (Never an expectation for grooms!) Not just dressing for the occasion now, judging by the money spent on wedding dresses. Status, more than the occasion.

It's fascinating to consider how we dress for the major occasions in our lives. Even today women in many parts of the world, still sew, weave or embroider complicated outfits for special occasions. Whether in Papua New Guinean or Navaho tribal society, amongst the people of



Dressy: Wearing purple with a red hat!

Uzbekistan or the cowboys of Texas, it is important to dress up for some occasions.

I went to the Tamworth Music Festival, with friends. Cowboy boots and hats were everywhere, dressing for the occasion, rather an indication of their status.

Remember what was expected at a formal do? Some women still "dress to the nines". We wouldn't wear our Birkenstocks, but jeans are fine in most situations provided the shoes and top are more 'formal' or flashier. (Who'da thunk it?) Is this to show how cool the wearers are, a different status?

"When I get old I shall wear purple with a red hat that doesn't go!" is the watch cry of older women as they dump some of the restrictions they felt in the past. Is this dressing for their new status? Most of us wouldn't have worn gym tights when we were younger but almost all older women in Seniors' classes at the gym wear tights, dressing for comfort, still dressing "for the occasion".

The importance attached to clothes for the occasion is not new. It has thus always been so. Why? This behaviour is certainly encouraged by clothing manufacturers and the advertising industry, but it goes beyond that.

Are humans just part of the animal kingdom? After all, colour and form are important in many mating rituals. Or is it an attempt to be higher up in the pecking order, to show higher status in society? We certainly attach importance to how we are dressed compared to other people.

Or do human beings simply

'tart up' because it makes them feel good? Do we need an anthropologist or a psychologist to tell us why?

Lorraine Inglis



Happy Toilet program helps seniors

As a non-profit charity the Restroom Association (Singapore) has made the creation of job opportunities for seniors its priority. We have initiated the Certified Eco-Assessor program, which trains and employs needy seniors to conduct Happy Toilet assessments near their homes.

These seniors are paid only when there is a request from owners and operators to assess their toilets. A steady income for them is achievable only when there are more Happy Toilet Program participants.

We established the program, a nationally recognised rating system for public toilets, in 2003. Committed toilet owners and operators, including some cleaning companies have actively

participated in it. There are about 30,000 public toilets in Singapore, but only 800 are Happy Toilets.*

We appeal to committed owners and operators to participate in the Happy Toilet Program, not only to provide clean toilets for the public, but also to help the seniors under the Certified Eco-Assessment program.”

Letter to *The Straits Times* (May 2, 2013) written by Emerson Hee, Executive Director, Restroom Association (Singapore).

Rita Tratt

***Rita visited happy toilets and less happy toilets, but observed none seemed totally unhappy.**

Editor's note: I believe there's an app so you can locate happy ones.



Mixed messages

Recently I attended the 7th Australian Women's Health Conference that was held in Sydney this year. One of the talks was on the importance of how to get your message across using social media. The talk was very informative and when I spotted what I thought was their

table with little parcels of info on it I asked if I could have one. The girl told me to take as many as I liked but I assured her one would be enough. When I got home, I was rather surprised what the nice little package contained. Not links to guide me through the maze of social media and how to use it!

I had a condom with a message on how to practice safe sex. I still don't know much about navigating social media but I thought their message was very apt: "It's a conversation best had with your clothes on."

Barbara Malcolm



More than one way...

I got on an almost-full bus, right behind a frail older man. An equally frail older woman stood up and offered him a seat. Embarrassed, a couple of younger people then stood up, so he got a seat, and so did I, next to the older woman. She told me she does that all the time. She offers her seat to older people to shame others into standing up. I like it.

Lorraine Inglis



Notices

Sydney AGM 2013

Thursday, July 18, 10am-1pm at Mott Hall, Millers' Point.

We will be electing new members of our committee.

This is not an onerous task. We meet on each second month, on the first Wednesday of the month at 1pm, for about one to two hours. Please consider nominating for the committee, even if you can't be there at the AGM. You are needed.

An important point for discussion is the continuance of OWN Australia. RSVP for the AGM by July 10, call 92474202.



Lost Ladies

June 5th: 10am at Museum of Contemporary Art. \$15 if we get 15 coming or a few dollars more if we don't. Jeff Wall photographer with education guide.

June 12th: 10am at the National Maritime Museum for 2 exhibitions - *Elysium*: brilliant photographs of Antarctica, and *Taste of India*: about colonial trade with India. No charge. Lunch at Yots café for end of semester. (I'm doing a talk at the Pioneer Women's Association on

Sophie Steffanoni at 12 next week so not available).

June 19th: 10am, 2 curator tours of Lloyd Rees and Jim Henson (cloud studies). Cost \$8.



Drumming Group

Drumming will follow after Tai Chi as part of the Wellness on Wednesday Program at Abraham Mott Hall, Argyle Street, Millers Point. Once a month, we meet for lunch and a chat from 12 noon. The session time is 12.30-1.30pm.

Next session is Wednesday, June 12. Future dates: 17th July, 7th August, 11th September, 9th October, 13th November, 4th December. Contact Suzanne on 0425 346 927.



OWN Book Club

Books to discuss on these dates.

June 2013

17 June: *Frantic* by Katherine Howell.

July 2013

15 July: * Instead of a book, this time an author - Joyce Carol Oates. Your choice of book by this author. Be prepared to share your reading with others.

August 2013

19 August: *The Eye of the Storm* by Patrick White.

September 2013

16 September: *Gilgamesh* by Joan London.

If you have any trouble getting the scheduled books, please let me know. Happy reading!

Anne-Marie Kestle:

Mob 040 8740 435.



Politics in the Pub

Gaelic Club, Devonshire St.

June 7: No meeting, long weekend

June 14: *Genocide in Sri Lanka: Why no response from Australia?*

● Dr Sam Pari, Spokesperson for Australian Tamil congress

● Gordon Weiss, former UN Spokesperson on Sri Lanka, author of *The Cage: Fight for Sri Lanka and the last Days of the Tamil Tigers*.



Mystery Reading Group

Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, 10.30am-12.30pm.

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* –

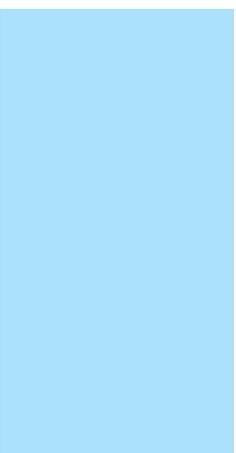
IF UNDELIVERED PLEASE RETURN TO:

Older Women's Network NSW Inc.

87 Lower Fort Street

Millers Point NSW 2000

OWN Matters



**PRINT
POST
PP2393337/00007**

**POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA**