



OWN MATTERS

International Women's Day. Best Christmas Ever

Then... and Now. A Contemporary Christmas. Memory Tree.

Christmas 1952 in the Country. Care Australia. Orphan's Xmas.

Poops Pups. Theatre Group had a Ball. Scotland Can Be Fun!



Give the gift of Care this year

Make your present count
with a CAREgift that could
change the life of those in
need of your support.



Feeling at home in Scotland

Blackhouses were just one
of the attractions during a
fun trip around the land
of kilts and haggis.



Moving times at meeting

The Theatre Group brought
their own brand of sparkle to
the OWN quarterly meeting
hosted by Brisbane Waters.



A Christmas to remember

A ride to town, fun at the
park, a double breakdown
and a visit from Santa -
a real country Christmas.



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Who Are We?

The Older Women's Network (OWN) NSW is the peak body for 18 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 \$30 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, leave a message, with your contact number.

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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.*

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International Women's Day 2014

Festival of Ideas

“I Protest”

Friday March 7

9:30am-1pm

Where: SMSA, Level 1, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney

Amazing speakers include Meredith Burgmann,
Lee Rhiannon, Adele Horin, Irina Dunn, Eva Cox,
Wendy Bacon and more...feisty older women all

Come and join the fun!!!!

Entrance: Gold coin donation

RSVP: Your name plus email address or phone number
sydneyown@gmail.com

Letters

Moment of truth

We had just enjoyed a steak and chips dinner at the local pub and were not quite ready to go home. The early evening was pleasant and as it was a late shopping night, my Devoted Spouse suggested a stroll down the central shopping mall.

A relaxed atmosphere prevailed amongst the crowd of shoppers. Street cafes were well patronised outside brightly lit shops. Attracted by colourful clothing in shop windows, I asked DS to wait for a moment or two while I took a quick look inside one of the fashion shops to absorb all the glitz, style and glamour of contemporary women's clothing.

Inspecting handbags, I glanced ahead and caught the gaze of an older woman also in the shop. I looked away quickly, not wishing to seem intrusive and remarking to myself that it was unusual to see a woman of such an age in a shop like this. Surreptitiously, I took another look because curiosity had got the better of me. It was then I realised I was looking in a mirror . . .

Bev Cameron



© Mylène Bressan

Feeding 5000 survey

You may have read our article about Ozharvest, Australia's leading food rescue charity, in the last issue of *OWN Matters*.

A new survey conducted by OzHarvest shows that 60 per cent of those who attended the inaugural Feeding the 5000 Sydney event said they would actively change their food waste habits at home by writing meal plans, using leftovers, reading labels more carefully or checking use by dates.

OzHarvest believes that the event made an enormous impact by getting everyday Aussies to realise how much good food is wasted every year and the impact that has on the environment, while recognising that there is still much to do before the \$7.8 billion worth of food wasted per annum will significantly decrease.



Not another candle holder

We are at that time of the year when we try to think of what to buy for friends and family, but maybe we could go further than our usual shopping centres and give something for those less fortunate. It certainly makes shopping easier, without the crowds, and you can save on wrapping paper.

■ Love a duck - CARE

Australia. From a pair of ducks, to a blackboard, to a village water system - these charitable gifts help you get gifting while transforming the life of someone living in poverty. Your giftee will receive a heartwarming card detailing their 'gift', and won't have another candle holder cluttering the house!

■ **Festive Fair Trade gifts** - If you want to give a physical gift while still doing good, then shop at the Oxfam Shop. You'll find quirky and fun gifts to delight kids, but also décor, accessories and even wine for adults. All are handmade, support Fair Trade, and have a unique charm.

■ **Paws for thought** - Why not adopt a four-legged friend from WWF? These gifts support the conservation of endangered animals and make perfect charitable gifts for kids or adults. Not only do all profits go to fund the care and protection of your chosen wild animal, your giftee gets their own 'adoption' papers AND a cuddly plush version too.



OWN Sydney

We are looking for someone who can attend our meetings, take notes, and write up the minutes. The next meeting would be on February 14. The meeting begins at 10.00 and probably goes to 12.00. We are willing to pay for your time. Let me know at louinglis@gmail.com

Sydney OWN committee



OWN Sydney Solstice

Our end of 2013 celebrations take place on **Thursday, December 12 at Lower Fort St. Come along, bring a plate, join the party and catch up with old friends. We begin at 11am, and finish about 2pm, and always enjoy the company. Don't bring too much food, because remember EAT THINK SAVE. The raffle for Kool Kids will be drawn.**
OWN Sydney Committee

Prevent fraud

Do not sign the back of your credit cards. Instead use a pin (These will become mandatory next year).

Limit the damage if your wallet is lost or stolen by:

■ Photocopying both sides of your driver's licence, and all credit/debit cards, Centrelink card, Medicare card, Senior's card. Keep the photocopy in a safe place (not your wallet). Also photocopy your passport. (We've all heard horror stories about fraud that's committed on us in

stealing a name, address, credit card and so on.)

■ Cancelling your credit cards immediately. It's important to have toll free numbers and your card numbers handy so you know whom to call.

■ Filing a police report in the jurisdiction where your wallet was stolen.

■ Calling the three national credit reporting organisations immediately to place a fraud alert on your Tax File Number, Passport number and Driver's Licence.

Here are some toll free numbers you might need. Keep a copy of these with you. Also find the toll free numbers of your bank/credit union.

Visa Card Australia
1800 621 199

Visa Card International
1800 450 346

Lost Travellers' Cheques
1800 127 477

MasterCard Australia
(02) 9466 3700

MasterCard International
1800 120 113

Bankcard Australia
(02) 9281 6633

Medicare
132 011

Centrelink Fraud
137 230

Seniors Card
1300 364 758

Passport
131 232



At and Beyond the Rocks

OWN Quarterly Meeting

Over 70 women gathered at Niagara Park on 30 August for the OWN Quarterly Meeting hosted by the Brisbane Waters group.

Discussions on affordable housing raised many questions, especially the pros and cons of opening our homes to people requiring housing. If our own housing became an issue, would we downsize, enter co-operative housing, social housing, move into a retirement village or live with family? With affordable housing hard to find and the waiting list on the Central Coast for subsidised housing around twelve years this is a major issue.

A very useful report was distributed on the results of the health services survey conducted among OWN groups. Each group received statistics for their local area, which will be very useful for future planning.

Thank you to everyone who



The Theatre Group performs

supported our raffle. We raised \$179 and are well on our way to our target to assist the Mental Health Unit at Gosford Hospital.

The WOW factor at the gathering was the performance by our amazing Theatre Group who gave us some old favourites and previewed their new show, *Ma, it's Time to Move*. Another great hit in the making – I can't wait to see the final version. This coupled with a sumptuous morning tea and lunch. It seemed as though everyone ended the day filled with great food and food for thought.

Thank you to all the OWN members from around NSW who made the effort to visit us on the Central Coast.

**Carole Davidson, Convenor
Brisbane Waters OWN**



Snippets from the city and the bush

Northside OWN & Wellness Centre

We continue our Wednesday activities: Feldenkrais, Qi Gong and information sessions, and still make cushions for women who have had a mastectomy. The Zonta Club supplies the cushions to the Mater Hospital, which thanked us at a special afternoon tea at the beginning of the year. We have had speakers from Home Instead Senior Care, Diabetes, Older People and the Law, the new Concourse Library, Strata Living, National Stroke Foundation, Chiropractor and Parkinson's Association. This year we held a series of workshops called 'The Journey' led by Aloma Fennell, founder of The Senior Agenda.



Parramatta OWN

We are a small friendly group situated in Harris Park Community Centre. Speakers this year came from the NSW Electricity and Water Ombudsman, the Cancer Council and Fair Trading. Enjoyable outings included Cafe

Saligna, in the Cumberland State Forest at Pennant Hills, Swane's Nursery at Dural, a fashion parade in St Patrick's Cathedral Hall, open days at two retirement villages, and Seniors concerts locally and the Premier's Concerts. We attended the annual lunch and musical performance presented by the students of Our Lady of Mercy College, Parramatta. Last but not least, we always appreciate invitations to Blacktown OWN functions.



Penrith OWN

We were very happy to host The OWN NSW Quarterly Meeting at Penrith in May. It was very pleasing to meet up with so many OWN groups. We still meet every third Saturday for a social afternoon as well as maintaining our weekly activities of Yoga, Tai Chi, Aqua Exercise and International Dance.

Our International Dance Group performed at the 30th Anniversary of the Penrith Seniors' Centre. This was attended by the local Member of Parliament, the Mayor and Councillors. We have been able to link up with a weekly gentle exercise group, which helps with the cost of an instructor. Because of our weekly wellness activities we have had some younger members joining OWN.



Southern Highlands Older Women's Network

Our guest speakers this year were: Daphne Robertson, Southern Highlands Community

Hospice; Nerida Campbell, heart disease and women; Ashley Yeadon, reverse mortgages and other ways to access finance; Richard Mills, Dying With Dignity; Denele Crozier, the work of Women's Health Centres in promoting better health outcomes for older women; Nicola Robson, towards creating age-friendly communities in our Shire; Pat Fulton, the importance of doing something about hearing loss and Robyn Smith in her role as Stroke Safe Ambassador.

Our September "Getting To Know You" meeting, where members were in small groups to discuss light-hearted topics, was another success. Most members, especially new ones, appreciate the opportunity to mix and to "get to know" one another better.



Sutherland OWN Wellness centre

The computer course in conjunction with Gynea Tafe is ongoing with thirteen graduates in June. The enrolment for the fourth quarter is a full class of fifteen. Our one-to-one mentors are volunteers who make a big commitment of their time.

In November, we took part in the Cook Community Classic. It's a swimming competition but groups are encouraged to participate. We had a kiosk in Cronulla Park to sell clothes, books and plants. For the third year, we combined with the students of Engadine High School to provide a concert in Seniors Week, funded by a

Government Grant. We had a student audience of 260, student performers, helpers and crew of 65 and guests of 160.



Wollondilly OWN

Our group continues to meet monthly. We enjoy gentle exercise, Scottish dancing, bus and train trips, our Holiday Group as well as our Crafty Ladies. We have had some troubles with our Community Bus this year so we are curtailing our trips for some months and as we go to press are informed of further problems, the Council "Roller" backing into the bus! We recently attended the Health Forum in Wollongong presented by Alzheimer's Australia.



Wyong OWN

We took the train to Newcastle Art Gallery for an exhibition on early settlement of the city. Another train ride took us to the new Katoomba Art Centre and Library, then a bus to the Three Sisters. On a perfect autumn day we took the train to Brooklyn to board the Riverboat Postman for a trip on the Hawkesbury River. The Sculpture in the Greens at Kooindah Waters golf club is always popular and close by. A visit to NAISDA College at Kariong was a highlight of this year. We were invited to attend the final practice for their mid-year concert. NAISDA teaches contemporary Australian indigenous dance to developing artists. We thoroughly enjoyed the energy, enthusiasm and skill of the young artists.





Aboriginal Support Circle Issues

NASCA helps Aboriginal Youngsters Stay on Track

The National Sporting Chance Academy (NASCA), located at the National Centre of Indigenous Action has been empowering young people and their communities to make positive lifestyle choices for nearly 20 years. It now runs an expanded program including educational and cultural initiatives, personal development activities and community involvement programs, as well as encouraging them in sport.

The Walan Darramal Academy, which operates in three South Sydney schools, offers an holistic approach and mentoring approach to students, with sporting opportunities, career and employment programs, university site visits and meeting with potential employers. Already literacy and numeracy levels are improving and the students are asked to think about their lifestyles to gain confidence and reach their full potential.

In addition to academies in

Sydney and central NSW, NASCA also engages young people using professional sportspeople as role models, such as Libby Trickett and Patrick Johnson, who are actively involved in the organisation.



Raffle Time Again

The Aboriginal Support Circle is again raffling one of Barbara Malcolm's stunning quilts, this time "Welcoming Spring" plus we have some exciting consolation prizes including a hand-painted coolamon. Tickets are \$1 each or 3 for \$2, and the raffle will be drawn at OWN's Solstice Party.



Nova Maree Peris

Nova Peris first came to prominence as the first Aboriginal woman to win an Olympic gold medal as part of the Australian women's hockey team in 1996.

Born in Darwin in 1971, she became a gold medal winner in the World Cup, Champion's

Trophy and the Commonwealth Games as a runner, and was also announced as Young Australian of the Year in 1997. She competed at some of the world's biggest sporting events. She established the Nova Peris Girls' Academy at St. John's Catholic College in Darwin to enable young, promising women to become boarders and receive the education they need and deserve.

Sworn into Parliament as a Senator from the Northern Territory, in her maiden speech on the 12th November, Nova paid tribute to her grandmother and mother, both stolen children, saying "in my heart I know that part of my life (sport) is virtually meaningless compared to the ability to survive shown by my grandparents and mother."

She talked about struggle, injustice and heartache being part of Indigenous history, and said that she is now a Senator in the Australian Federal Parliament because "Aboriginal Australians are symbolic of triumph over adversity. We represent knowledge and wisdom



held in land and country.”
Nova acknowledged that she was elected to represent all Territorians and pledged to put their concerns first.

We congratulate her and hope she will succeed in her efforts.



Women of Influence 2013

Eleven Indigenous women are on the Westpac/*Australian Financial Review's* annual 100 Women of Influence list.

June Oscar, CEO of Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre in Fitzroy Crossing, Western Australia, is the overall winner in the social enterprise category. She started as a station cook and went on to lead a successful fight to reduce grog in her community, taking on the alcohol industry, government departments and parts of her own community.

Bronwyn Bancroft is a founding member of the Boomalli Artist's Co-operative and director of her company, Designer Aboriginals

Pty Ltd. Through painting, literature, fashion and textile design her work is represented throughout Australia and in many countries overseas.

Social activist, Tanya Hosch, is deputy campaign director for Recognise, the movement to ensure the recognition of Australia's First People in the constitution.

Torres Strait Islander, Rachele Towart, is Chief Executive Officer in the AILC (Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre).

Michelle Deshong, feminist and campaigner, has a degree in Political Science and is also part of the AILC.

Professor Megan Davis, human rights lawyer, is Director, Indigenous Law Centre, Faculty of Law at the University of New South Wales. She has been elected for her second term on the U.N. Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

Krita McMeekan is a young third year law student at the University of Western Australia with a Young People's Human Rights medal. She has international, national and community achievements working to build respect between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

Shelley Reyes, (order of Australia 2012) is the managing director of Arrilla Indigenous Consultants and Services, which provides services that assist Indigenous and wider communities to work more effectively together in business, government and community.

Torres Strait Islander, Tanya Denning, is Channel Manager of NITV (National Indigenous Television). She directs the overall management, programming, production, communication and digital divisions within the network.

Terri Janke is the first female recipient of the Indigenous Lawyer of the Year award and was NAIDOC person of the year in 2011. Based in Sydney, Terri Janke and Company empower Indigenous people with legal solutions to complex legal matters.

Health care leader, Julie Tongs OAM, is Chief Executive Officer of Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service in Canberra. She was the National Finalist as Australia's Local Hero in 2012.

Congratulations to all these high calibre leaders!

Stories by Pat Zinn



*We laugh or cry - or sometimes both
- when we look back to our past.
But it certainly all contributed to
the women we are today.*

Christmas 1952 in the Country

My most memorable Christmas was the first Christmas after my father was killed on the job. We had all decided it was going to be GREAT. That was a tall order: we were on the farm, no money, and the crop was not good.

My sister Della had four kids: Ronnie (6), Myra (5), Robert (3) and Bernie (two weeks old). My mother was still in shock (my father had been killed in July), and my brother-in-law was worried about finances. I was twelve and the 'festive co-ordinator'.

On the 24 December off we all went, 25 miles into Parkes on a gravel road in our Whippet with no side windows. My brother-in-law was driving, my sister was in the front nursing Bernie, while my mother and I were in the back with Ronnie, Myra and Robert on our laps. The bumpy drive into town was made easier with 'I spy'. Three-year-old Robert always 'spied' a crocodile (we lived beside a lagoon and I had told the kids crocodiles lived there). Well, there might be, you never know what's in lagoons at Bogan Gate.

I had the best day with the four kids in the town park. Mum and Della arrived at midday with pies – the best lunch I have ever had. They dropped off some boxes for 'the kid brigade' to mind and set off on another round of shopping. At 6pm we set off home with a pile of boxes across the back seat and three kids asleep. That bed on the verandah was beckoning me, that's for sure.



Memories of an old Whippet



Bogan Gate Road

Five miles out of Bogan Gate a tremendous bang woke us up. We had blown a tyre. Out with all the boxes as the spare was under them. I sat with the three kids on the boxes singing carols and watching for Santa. We did see a flash through the sky so we decided there he was 'doing' Sydney.

Loaded up and spare tyre on we started off again and... bang... the spare had blown. My brother-in-

law had to walk the five miles into Bogan Gate to borrow a spare pulse wheel. Two hours later, he arrived back. Trouble! The wheel and tyre were a bigger size than what was on the old Whippet.

Country people can always 'make do'. At 3am we hobbled into our drive and in less than an hour we had the kids asleep, presents wrapped, gum tree decorated on the veranda and were in bed.

At 6am three excited kids came bounding onto my bed, "Santa hasn't missed us... come and see what we have."

Yes, that really was our GREATEST Christmas.

Coral Littlewood

.....

Then...and now

I was twenty-two years old, a single Mum with three children in the days when there was no government support at all for single mothers. Earlier I had walked away from my marriage having decided that history would not repeat itself and that my children would not grow up with violence in their home.

To support us I worked three jobs, in a clothing factory 8am to 4.30pm during the week, would knock off there, make an hour's train and bus trip into Sydney to work as a waitress till 10pm on Wednesday and Thursday, and 12.30am Friday – plus weekend shifts whenever they were available.

They often finished late at night, which would mean getting home in the early hours of the

morning, with a 45-minute walk home from the station.

One Friday evening I received a good tip from a customer. It was so exciting to get a small sum of money that I was not expecting to have. That night when I knocked off work after a five-hour shift I was so tired I really was dragging my feet as I walked away from the restaurant. I decided that the money was mine; I was going to treat myself.

At a café near Central Railway Station I sat down to the luxury of being the one who was waited on, and ordered spaghetti on toast and a cup of tea. When the waitress delivered my order she put the bill on the table. It was more than double what the tip had been. Suddenly my eyes filled with tears and I thought to myself, what was I thinking? That extra money should have done so much more than to be wasted on a plate of spaghetti and a cup of tea.

I tried to eat and the food tasted like sawdust. Not that it was not good food, it probably was, but just thinking of how that money could have been better spent removed my appetite and filled me with remorse. I left the restaurant and during the trip home that night I can still recall how my tears made the lights all look streaky as the train carried me to Granville. The walk home through deserted streets seemed endless.

I do not regret those years, nor do I think of them as hard as they helped shape who I am today and I am happy being that person. My children grew up to be fine citizens and I am proud of each one of them. They have happy marriages, and history doesn't necessarily repeat itself.

I am one of your OWN.

Anon

.....

Just what does Christmas mean? Most of us would say a gathering with our loved ones. How, where and when we celebrate is changing.

A contemporary Christmas

Long ago, in my post-war childhood family Christmas celebrations, tradition ruled. Familiar decorations were hung, traditional roast turkey followed by Christmas pudding made the predictable menu and grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins faithfully rejoined us for the big annual event.

But now, in the context of a rapidly changing world which includes the impact of the pill, feminism, no-fault divorce, 'musical chairs' relationships, globalisation of trade and finance and a future of almost incomprehensible development, family Christmas traditions are not exempt from the tsunami of change. These are the thoughts that shape the way I interpret my own family's way of 'doing' Christmas now, so different from my childhood experiences.

Unlike my own widowed mother's experience when she was in her mid-70s and took pride of place as honoured guest at my family's Christmas table, I, now in my mid-70s, am still the organising linchpin for my family's Christmas celebrations.

Around the table will gather mother, 96, my aunt 94, one son, his former wife and their two children, my other son, his daughter by his first relationship, his subsequent former partner and their son plus his currently closest friend, my widowed sister, my devoted spouse [whose married children and their children we shall visit on another day] and me.

Our celebration will be held in mid-November because so many of us have travel plans in



December that getting together on the traditional day will not be possible and our menu, selected by the next generation, will be Japanese take-aways. As a gesture to tradition, I shall make a Christmas cake and ensure we have a Christmassy table setting and decorations. Gift-giving will be retained only for the school-age children as we all agree in this age of excessive consumption, gift-giving should be directed to others who really could use a little help.

As a still-very-busy older woman I continue to enjoy the sweet memories of Christmas Day as it once was. I am nevertheless thankful for the simplicity of our way of celebrating Christmas now and even more for the fact that my family members still appreciate being together, strengthening our sense of family identity.

In our uncertain and rapidly changing times, knowing who we are and where we belong is a precious defence in a sometimes heartless world.

Bev Cameron



An orphan's Christmas

Well, here I am, 72 years old, mother of three, grandmother to six and a half, all living within driving distance, and yet I am an orphan for Christmas.

“Boxing Day...no problem...we'll see you then, Mum, so why should it matter??”

But Christmas is Christmas, with all the excitement and children's delight, and food and laughter and loved ones around. It's all a bit stale by Boxing Day - a bit more duty, a bit less excitement.

So I am an orphan on Christmas Day, maybe along with several thousand other older women living on their own... but near enough to babysit.

Oh well I guess I will have to get used to no more lack of sleep, noise, over-excited kids, too much cooking and too many lollies and general mayhem. A quiet Christmas for me... or just maybe I might meet a few disgraceful older women friends and we can have our very OWN special orphans' Christmas.

Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night!

Jenny Onyx

.....

Best Christmas ever

AXmas in Hong Kong with friends many years ago turned out to be one of the best



Xmas we've ever experienced. We were staying at a hotel where Xmas dinner was on the menu at a very inflated price and the atmosphere was zilch. So, the four of us took off about 11 am to search for a suitable restaurant.

We knew that we wanted turkey and the rest, which was totally unreasonable, and for an hour and a half we searched high and low for that certain place that might offer up at least one course of a traditional meal. As I get very grumpy when I'm hungry I started to do some controlled mutterings along the lines of "I don't think we're ever going to find what we want", when there it appeared - a marvellous Chinese restaurant advertising a traditional dinner.

And what a dinner it was - turkey with all the trimmings and plum pudding and to make it extra special some dumplings to start with. The waiters gave us each a bag, which contained whistles, a little plastic toy and a cracker. As on other occasions I found that having limited local language is rarely a problem and the goodwill that was in that room, where we were the only diners, has stayed in our hearts forever.

Rita Tratt

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We can enjoy and share this time of the year in many different ways. Parties, gifts, performances and decorations - all personal and individual.

Care Australia

CARE Australia is an international humanitarian aid organisation fighting global poverty, with a special focus on working with women and girls to bring about lasting change to their communities.

From the moment a girl is born into extreme poverty, she is too often destined to a life burdened with responsibility, with limited access to education, healthcare and in some countries is denied basic rights. CARE believes that supporting women and girls is one of the most effective ways to create sustainable outcomes in poor communities.

With Christmas just around the corner, CARE is urging Australians to give and receive a gift with a difference – a meaningful CAREgift which will help change the lives of women, girls and their families in communities all over the world.

You could:

- Send a girl to school. Girls are less likely to go to school, however an educated woman is more likely to have healthy babies and send them to school
- Provide access to savings and credit, so women can start a small business and improve the lives of their families.
- Provide clean water close to home, so women and girls don't have to spend hours every day walking to collect water.
- Provide chickens or goats, so families have access to nutritious eggs and milk to drink and sell.

The CAREgifts range features more than 30 gifts, starting at \$10 for school books. Other gifts include a piglet for \$40, send a girl to school for \$69, help a woman start a small business for \$100,



Help a woman start her own business

train a teacher for \$330 and buy a village water system for \$2,500. CAREgifts are available to purchase from www.caregifts.org.au or by calling 1800 020 046.



Merry Christmas one and all - the Theatre Group has had a ball

Well, you can't keep good women down and this year has been a cracker – a Xmas cracker chock full of goodies. We've had the pleasure of performing at the Aboriginal Support Group's 20th birthday party and for the OWN Australia Conference in Perth. It's always so good to perform in front of OWN members and friends.

The year started with a certain amount of expectation and tension in the air as the writers amongst us worked on our new show, called *Ma, It's Time to Move*. Writing and putting a show together is never an easy task and there are so many cooks amongst us who wish to add and eliminate the ingredients that have been carefully prepared.

“Mmm, I don’t like this piece, or song, or skit,” and it’s back to the drawing board. Frustrations abound as we try to get a final script prepared, a process that takes several months and has considerable input from the director, our pianist, and the troupe. February turns into April and May and we start to sweat. Will we have a show ready for the OWN Australia Conference in September?

Well, we did perform and it was so pertinent to the conference and so recognisable to our audience in terms of the challenges many of us face. Women came up to us after the conference and told us their stories and the difficulties they could see ahead, where market rentals become unaffordable and social housing is a scarce commodity.

2013 saw Ruth Thompson appointed as the new Coordinator, whilst I retire to the back benches. Not the trenches, I hasten to add. Uma Kali Shakti, our Director, who has been with us for two years and guided us through our new show, leaves on a very positive note. Uma has written and directed a musical called *Buckley’s Chance*, which opened on October 30 for a two-week run, and is working on a children’s Christmas pantomime. What was that famous WC Fields quote – “I never work with children or animals”? He obviously never performed at a Christmas panto or had the joys that lie ahead for Uma.

Love and peace from all of us.

Rita Tratt



My memory tree

It’s almost time to get out my memory tree again, and my treasure box of decorations. I’ve been doing this for years. Being an atheist meant cutting out angels and stars. Living in the southern hemisphere meant snow boots, snowmen and snowflakes looked ridiculous.

Each year I have to choose which memories to hang on the tree. To represent Australia might be Ugg boots, real gum nuts or native animals (including some I have cut from copper). I can choose the New York taxi, the brass saxophone from New Orleans, the brass bells from Katmandu, the dream saver



Lorraine’s special memory tree decorations and her latest addition, a wooden donkey



from USA, the macaw from Cuba, the moose from Canada; they all bring back memories. Memories of my children are also there: figures from their travels in Japan and Europe, a bull from when my son was in Spain, and even Thomas the Tank Engine for my grandson. I haven’t found a Dorothy Dinosaur for my granddaughters yet.

The custom has been passed on. When we buy a “memory”, we buy three: one for my tree, one for my son and one for my daughter. New to my tree this year are a ball brought back by a friend, and just this week a wooden donkey from my son’s holiday in Sicily. I chose the red one.

I really love decorating my tree, with things that remind me of good times and those that commemorate a special family memory.

Lorraine Inglis



Retirement can be fun, as these members of OWN show. From sitting back when you're POOPed or travelling half way across the world.

Poops Pups

I'm a volunteer foster carer for a unit of the RSPCA called POOPS. I look after dogs for elderly people who have to go to hospital, then sometimes rehab and respite, for a short period – perhaps one week, once for eight months.

I love this work; it fulfils my need to walk, and to have company when I'm at home. And, on the whole, I imagine the people whose dogs I look after are glad of the service. But sometimes I wonder...

I have a marvellous recliner, on which I put the footrest up, lie back, and settle down for my newspaper reading. One day about a year ago I finished with the paper, snapped the footrest down and got up to do my chores – washed some dishes, watered the garden, fed the birds, greeted the guests in my tourist home up the back. They asked where Snowy, my then current and very popular dog, was and I realised I hadn't seen him for at least an hour.

I went around the house calling, then – worried that he may somehow have escaped the garden – walked around the block calling him. I even went down the side of the house that I never use in



case he'd gone under the house and got stuck. I thought I heard a bark, but I couldn't identify where it was coming from.

Really concerned by now, I went back into the house, calling Snowy's name – no response. Then I went into my lounge room, and thought I saw my recliner shake slightly. Of course! I raised the footrest and there was Snowy, looking at me mournfully. I'd locked him in his own private jail for well over an hour! Why he didn't bark when I called his name in the house is still a puzzle.

You'd think I'd have learned from that to always check that there's no dog under my footrest when I put it down. A fortnight ago, I got out of my recliner only to see the footrest shaking violently. I quickly raised it realising JoJo must be under there. But he wasn't just sitting mournfully gazing at me; his collar had got caught in a coil and he was thrashing around trying to get free, but not making a sound.

I desperately tried to pull the

collar over the end of the coil, unsuccessfully. Fearing he'd strangle to death, I realised my only recourse was to undo his collar. Somehow or other I managed to get it off. He stayed well away from me for the rest of the day! Perhaps it's best we don't tell their owners these stories.

Anna Logan



Scotland can be fun!

I had another eight days in Scotland, but this time they were spent in part with a cousin across the sea in the Outer Hebrides, comprising the main islands of Lewis, North and South Harris, North and South Uist, and Barra.

I hired a car, although I'd never driven in the U.K. before. It was as non-confrontational as I'd imagined because of the narrow roadways on these islands.

Many of the roads are in fact single-track, which means cars can't pass each other. They have a sensible system of 'passing places', which are found about every 100m on both sides. When you see a car approaching, whoever reaches a passing place first pulls into it. The passing

driver gives a wave of thanks, which the pulled-over driver acknowledges with their own wave. Such civility!

Interesting tourist attractions are the Blackhouses, which were used until 150 years ago. Humans and animals shared these earthen, thatched houses where peat was used for cooking and heating. I visited one – with peat piled outside to keep a fire burning constantly inside – that had been kept in almost original condition. The Outer Hebrides were visited by the Vikings, so we saw a Norse age water wheel and kiln, apparently still in use in the 1940's.



Scottish Blackhouses were shared by humans and animals alike

The infrastructure required to link all the large and small islands (of which there are many) is incredible – ferries and causeways proliferate. Where we needed a ferry we booked ahead of time, as there may be only a few each day and we were on a schedule. We also booked our B&Bs ahead and were impressed with their quality and the friendliness of the hosts.

The story of the sinking of the *Iolaire*, in Lewis, is tragic. The *Iolaire* was carrying at least 245 sailors home from WWI on 1/1/1919. In sight of their homes, the ship hit rocks and

went down, with only forty men saved.

The northern part of the Islands has such a strict form of Protestantism that my first landlord didn't let me hang my clothing outside on a Sunday! The south is strongly Catholic, and therefore much more liberal.

I visited several marvellous museums of social history where I was able to trace the Highland Clearances, or just bad economic

times, that forced or encouraged Islanders to migrate to Canada, mainly to Cape Breton Island, which I just happened to visit in 2012.

The weather was incredibly warm during my holiday. No midges – of which I'd been constantly warned – were in evidence, and these two conditions certainly added to the enjoyment of the holiday.

Anna Logan



Notices



StreetSmart

StreetSmart takes action against homelessness. We raise funds and awareness for small, 'hard to reach' grassroots services and projects. These projects provide critical services and emergency aid as well as promoting social inclusion, empowerment and sustainable change for people who are homeless or at risk. 100% of donations raised from the public are distributed in the form of grants. To date we have raised and distributed over \$2.55M to 724 grassroots projects for the homeless.

In the six weeks leading up to Christmas the STREETSMART charity has partnered with restaurants around Australia to encourage diners to give a little back this holiday season. While you're out celebrating or catching up with friends and family in the lead-up to Christmas think about adding a couple of dollars



per head to your restaurant bill to help the homeless. There are 38 restaurants in Sydney. Check the website: <http://www.streetsmartaustralia.org/> or email: adam@streetsmartaustralia.org

Birkenhead Saturday group

Birkenhead Saturday Group will meet on December 14. After the holiday break, it will resume January 11. The Cafe Birkenhead has moved to a new venue, but is on the same floor of the shopping mall as the previous location. Queries can be made to Bev Cameron on 9957-5367.

OWN book club list

January to April 2014

January 20: *Babel Tower* - by A.S. Byatt.

February 19th: *The Golden Notebook* - by Doris Lessing

March 17: *We Need to Talk About Kevin* - by Lionel Shriver

April 21: *The Merry-Go-Round in the Sea* - by Randolph Stow.

If you have any trouble getting the scheduled books, please let me know, call Anne-Marie Kestle 040 8740 435.

Happy reading.



OzHarvest

For the very first time in Australia Broadway shopping centre has installed a digital Christmas tree to appeal to their technology-savvy market that enables customers, using consumer generated content technology, to upload their very own photograph and Christmas message for everyone at Broadway to view.

For each photo or message uploaded on the tree Broadway will donate one dollar to OzHarvest. OzHarvest and Broadway are aiming for 10,000 people to participate in their campaign to raise \$10,000!

MEMBERS & FRIENDS
WELCOME TO ATTEND
ALL OUR ACTIVITIES

Wellness on Wednesdays

9.30am–12.30pm every
Wed until Dec 12. Resumes
Jan 23. Abraham Mott Hall,
Argyle Street, Millers Point.
Contact Lola 9665 8741 or
Joy 9698 5205

Lost Ladies

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

Film Discussion Group

You are invited on **Tues
Dec 10** to see **Night Train
to Lisbon**. Contact Yetty
on 9665 2050 for more
information.

**Bondi Junction Coffee
and Gossip Group**

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

Book Club

MON, DEC 16 - 12.30pm
at 87 Lower Fort St. **The
Drowner** by Robert Drewe.
Come at 12 with a sandwich
for lunch.

**Aboriginal Support
Circle**

Confirm details with Pat
Zinn 9389 1090 or email
pattzinn1@hotmail.com

**Saturday Social Group
at Birkenhead Point**

Will meet Dec 14 at
Birkenhead Café, 1st floor
Birkenhead Shopping
Complex. Will resume Jan
11, after holiday break.
Contact Bev Cameron on
9957 5367 or Meg Venning
on 9887 2386.

Adeline Chin, Senior Marketing
Manager, says, “At Broadway,
we are really encouraging the
people of Sydney to share a piece
of themselves, to share a photo,
a quote, a message – to really be
themselves this Christmas and in
doing so support the wonderful
work of OzHarvest.

“We are hoping people who get
involved walk away feeling joyful
and festive, as they celebrate the
real gift of Christmas – the gift of
giving.”

Ronni Kahn, of OzHarvest, says,
“For every dollar OzHarvest
is able to provide a meal to
someone in need, over the festive
season and throughout the year.
Thank you for sharing your love
and kindness.”



Tomato Festival Sydney

February 1-2, 2014

Join us for the weekend at the
Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney,
to celebrate everything to do with
the fabulous tomato.

It's not too late to start growing
and preparing for the Best in
Show as well as the Tomato Sauce
Challenge and Tomato Relish/
Chutney Challenge.



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Address: _____

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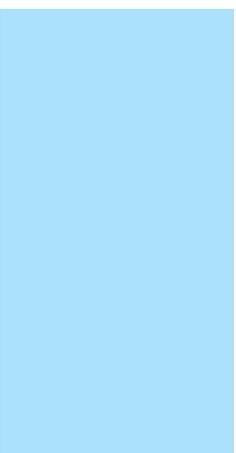
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