

## TREATY-A Conclusion to Unfinished Business

During the week-end of May 27-28, culminating in the historic and overwhelmingly successful walk across the Sydney Harbour Bridge, the final documents prepared by the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation were handed to the Prime Minister, the Governor-General, and representatives of State and Territory Governments. The first document, 'A Declaration Towards Reconciliation' is a statement of hope for the future, while the second document 'The Roadmap to Reconciliation' contains four national strategies which set out important recommendations for actions which will help put right the legacy of the past.

At the same time, the Aboriginal leaders Mick and Pat Dodson, Geoff Clark and Aden Ridgeway called for a treaty between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-indigenous Australians. Geoff Clark stated that indigenous people are not 'hung up on the name of a document which would settle outstanding business between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. (It's about) the rights to choose our own destiny, about our inherent rights in terms of culture, law, places, maintenance of these places, maintenance of our beliefs. That is how we outline the matters that may be retained in a treaty and how these rights may be protected.'

The idea of a treaty is not new, but has been put on the back burner many times. Aboriginal peoples have never conceded their sovereignty over this nation. However, there is no mention of Australian's first people in the Australian Constitution, which means that the few rights that indigenous people now possess are vulnerable. At present, only the Anti-discrimination Act protects the rights of the indigenous peoples.

There are treaties between indigenous peoples and governments in such places as Canada, Greenland, Norway, Sweden, Finland and New Zealand. These developments in national legal systems have been accompanied by parallel recognition of the distinct rights of indigenous peoples in International law through the United Nations.

John Howard has said that calls for a treaty are divisive, However, surely there is a division at this present time because of 'unfinished business' which can only be concluded with an agreement such as a treaty or other legal text? The Federal Opposition and Australian Democrats have said that they are prepared to consider a treaty with Australian indigenous people.

Not all indigenous people are united in the present call for a treaty. Evelyn Scott, chairperson of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, who is against the present call for a treaty, sees the necessity for working towards a 'legislative framework to allow for negotiated outcomes in matters of rights, self-determination, traditional law and constitutional reform.' She concedes however, that a treaty may be the end point of the process.

Pat Zinn

### **Sign the Pledge Book**

Between May and September 2000, the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation is circulating Pledge Books throughout Australia so that supporters of reconciliation can make a permanent record of their commitment. If you can't find a 'real' pledge book, you can use the Council Pledge Books on its website <http://www.reconciliation.org.au/pledgebook/index.htm>.

You are being asked to add your name to the following statement: "I hereby pledge my support for the reconciliation process and will work towards a united Australia which respects this land of ours; values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage; and provides justice and equity for all. "

## Coordinator's Report

Now we are four! Sam Smart has resigned as a member of the Working Committee and so we are now four coordinators. We regret Sam's decision but accept that the enormous amount of time she has put into the organisation could not extend for longer. Our heartfelt thanks to Sam. The good news is that she will continue her involvement with Wellness Projects which we expect to gather strength in the coming months. (We hope to receive confirmation soon of a collaborative project between NSW Health and OWN called 'Older Women's Wellness Research and Development in Rural and Isolated NSW' which will be focused in the Illawarra and South Coast regions.)

We have applied for a grant from the Women's Grants Program for a 'Statewide Network Development Project', and are also in the process of asking for financial support from various organisations for smaller projects. We keep our fingers firmly crossed and will celebrate if any of our submissions are successful.

At the last Working Committee meeting, we made some decisions that may be of interest to members generally. One was that the reference material that OWN holds is only to be used on the premises or photocopied – we're not about to become a lending library!

Another decision concerned the sale of our publications of older women's stories "Untold Stories" and "Tell Me More". One of our members took the initiative and arranged with her local bookseller to stock some of them. The shop purchased them from us for the recommended retail price and then added their mark-up. We applaud this initiative and would like others to put their mind to similar methods of shifting copies of 'Tell Me More' (we've now sold all 'Untold Stories'), which are currently stored at Windmill Street.

Next year is the International Year of Volunteers and Marie Fox, from Volunteering NSW, has been invited to talk to OWN members in July about issues around volunteering.

By now the OWN NSW Conference is over. It will be written about in more detail for the next Newsletter, and a formal report will be made available towards the end of July. At the time of writing, we are still in the thick of the thinking, discussing and worrying about organisational challenges relating to officially becoming a peak body.

Pam Ledden  
for the Coordination Group

## Cronulla Women Win

**A**s an example of supportive neighbourhoods action by women, Cronulla West Centre women must take the cake! Threatened with being turned out of their centre to make way for the Mall management offices, they collected 5,500 signatures to a petition, aroused local support and won the day.

I heard about it while they were still under threat – from my hairdresser, whose salon was totally in support. Straightaway I went to the centre, talked to the women and got the gen on what the Centre meant to them – many things, but especially personal support for each other as older women. The Centre was for young and older women (and even the stray dad in charge of toddlers), but it was for older women their daily or weekly networking centre.

My letter to the paper had a big response, most favourable. However, one disgruntled man wrote denigrating the Centre and me, saying I should move with the times which were a'changing and leave the decisions about such things to the Shire Council. Unfortunately for him, his letter was published the day after the women and their lobbyist, my niece, sat in the gallery with their placards as the Council considered the issue and decided unanimously that the Centre should remain. And that the conditions of its existence should guarantee permanence!

I've replied to his patronising letter and am awaiting its publication. Some of its comments are:

1: Joseph, you suggest I don't understand that times are a'changing. But I agree that they are. It's a sign that times are a'changing when a Council listens intently to the voice of the people, researches the issue and rises above partisan politics to reach a unanimous conclusion.

2: On this issue the council is with it, man!" Joseph – could you be the one who is behind the times?

Noreen Hewett

## OWN MEMBERS GETTING TOGETHER LOCALLY

These small neighbourhood groups are developing into quite an interesting project! Some around metropolitan Sydney are now into their third meetings, while others are still just starting up.

Because it is up to each small group to decide what they will do, activities have varied from coffee and chat mornings, a yum cha, to plans for a Theatre Group performance at the Waverley Council Theatrette. One group is having regular lunches in a community centre with non-OWN women, and hope to show our video 'Off The Beaten Track' in the near future. Another local group of mainly public tenants has held a discussion on Older Women and Wellbeing.

A Supportive Neighbourhoods' umbrella group meets every two months at OWN to share and debate issues related to getting together locally. While we acknowledge that a great deal is available in the community for older people, our focus is particularly on age and gender. At the recent meeting of the group, older women and social isolation was identified as a common concern. Some interesting written material and references on this topic are being assembled. For example, we are waiting on a Lancet article on Swedish research into social isolation.

On practical matters, it seems it is not always easy to find a supportive venue for local meetings as we tend to prefer a neutral place rather than meet at our homes. Sometimes a local community centre can provide a quiet and inexpensive spot. We are still debating whether the local groups are only for OWN members or whether we draw in other women – there is the matter of OWN's resources and older women's energy. We have also decided to prepare a 'how to' leaflet for groups that want to expand.

The discussion topic for the next meeting of the local groups' umbrella group is 'Social Isolation - what is it?' on August 2, 10am, at OWN. We will be looking at some tips to encourage community involvement.

The following are contacts for groups which meet locally or you can contact Joy Ross on 9251 9333, or leave a message on 9247 7046.

Ashfield: Pam Ledden 9797 9803  
Bondi: Peggy Hewett 9398 2428  
Lane Cove: Nina Walton 9438 5540  
Leichardt: Jan Monson 9692 9400  
Manly: Dorothy Cox 9949 2431  
Mosman: Evie Dunlop 9969 4929  
Parramatta: Caroline Goes 9632 4884  
Pymble: Ros Gordon 9449 3115  
South Sydney: Ermes Solari 9698 3384  
Sutherland: Barbara Burnham 9525 6198

The Platform for Action, which was developed by older people and community groups and which came out of the International Year of Older Persons, includes a section on Supportive Neighbourhoods. This document has now been reworked and will be launched on July 20th by Tom Uren. Do come and get your new copy. You must register by phoning COTA on 9286 3860.

Joy Ross

### Discussion Group

The topic of our monthly discussion group on Monday 19th June 2000 was "What brings enrichment to the individual and society?" Lots of ideas were brought forth and discussed in depth. They included:

- \* Life experience itself brings enlightenment from which we are enriched. We learn acceptance which is difficult to achieve.
- \* Ageing can be an enrichment in itself.
- \* Sharing in groups is stimulating and enriching.
- \* We believe that governments need a more enlightened attitude towards the preservation of the environment and we need to be vigilant on this issue.
- \* The \$1 ticket for the over-60s has made travel on public transport an enriching experience.
- \* Australian society has been enriched by the arrival of migrants from many cultures.
- \* There is an emotional enrichment when we encounter kindness from strangers - we are left with a good feeling.
- \* Spiritual awareness, love and care for each other, praise, appreciation and laughter, all these are enriching.

On a final note, we all agreed that being part of OWN has enriched our lives.

Next meeting will be on Monday, 17th July at 10.30 am. The subject will be "Education: what difference does it make?"

Joan Hook

## The Great Walk

It was an unforgettable day, May 25th, when a quarter of a million Australians, black and white, joined in solidarity to walk across the Harbour Bridge in support of reconciliation with the indigenous people of Australia.

The day dawned bright and clear and cold. Soon people in their thousands would make their way to the northern end of the bridge to begin the walk.

My friend and I joined a great wodge of people at Town Hall Station, jam-packed from George Street down to the railway platforms. We were allowed to proceed in batches on to the trains arriving every few minutes.

At North Sydney Station we all poured out, actually we were extruded on to the platform and were carried up to the road above by sheer numbers, our feet hardly touching the ground. There across the street was the welcome sight of our green and gold banner and the friendly, familiar faces of OWN members, smiling at us, or possibly in rictus from the icy wind. We moved off down the hill winding scarves round our frozen faces and then we were on the Bridge.

I could not believe this was happening. There were we all, fellow Australians, hundreds and hundreds of us, black and white, young and old, men, women and children of many backgrounds, from all over Australia. There were people in wheelchairs; there were famous faces; there was Malcolm Fraser and his family; the Premier of NSW walking together with the leader of his opposition and almost every well-known person of goodwill the you could think of all walking companionably together. Up the front, leading the procession were the stars of the reconciliation movement, people like Faith Bandler, Bonita Mabon and Sir Gustav Nossal. One could imagine what their feelings must have been...especially those who had been stolen children and their relatives.

A quarter of a million people, "ordinary" people, united in a common cause! There was such warmth and good humour. Happiness was in the air. It was palpable.

Suddenly, a roar went up. There blazoned in the blue sky was the word, "Sorry". We clapped and cheered and then there was another "Sorry" and another. Six altogether right across the sky. We later learnt that this splendid gesture was financed by a group of people organised by lawyer, Pia Van Der Zandt. The pilot, from the skywriting firm, Skyways, was a keen supporter of reconciliation and had contributed the extra words himself.

At the end of the Bridge the walkers diverged, many to the convenient line of Portaloos and thence either to Darling Harbour to join the festivities or to Tumbalong Park to look at the lovely presentation of the Sea of Hands.

As befitted the sybarites we are, my friend and I went off to look for hot coffee and discuss the experience of being part of this wonderful demonstration in support of reconciliation.

Some members of the Federal Government had walked, a few only, but not the Prime Minister. For him it proved to be a bridge too far. His Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Senator Herron, was left to feebly defend his boss, who, he said, had, "too many duties" in Canberra. Pathetic!

We should be resigned to the fact that the Prime Minister will never say sorry on our behalf. As Sir Gustav Nossal said, "We must wait for another government to gain office before this comes about, and may that be soon."

But it was a great day!

Muriel Hortin

## A Sorry State

I was extremely disappointed that on arrival at North Sydney Station at 10.40 for the People's Walk for Reconciliation I could not find any OWN women. I had hoped to find our banner but with so many people, I assumed that they had moved to the opposite side of the street. Nothing there, so I started looking for them up the street. On my way back I found that another OWN member was doing the same. I told her that I was going to look for them down the road. Big disappointment when I couldn't see anyone.

After having waited until way past 11 am I decided to do the walking by myself as that was what I came here to do. It was quite an experience seeing so many 'white' families walking. One elderly Aboriginal man took my hand and said, "Thank you for doing this for us." I told him "It's with great pleasure that I can show what I feel."

On Monday morning when I came into OWN to print the Newsletter, I found out that the OWN group had decided to move away from North Sydney Station with the banner at 10.30. On Tuesday, I heard of at least four more women who arrived between 10.45 and 11am. I wonder how many others there were?

I was very angry that the group moved away at 10.30 because the flyer had said very clearly - meet outside North Sydney Station at 10.30 for an 11 am start. I'm very disappointed that no one was willing or able to stop the group from leaving so early.

We've heard of all the virtues that older women have, but for some I feel that the words 'patience and care' are not among them.

Wilhelmina van Dorp

## Congratulations

Great news from the Greek Older Womens Network at Bankstown, which once again helps to raise funds for Cancer Research.

On 22nd May 2000 Greek Own proudly hosted for the second time Australia's biggest morning tea for the Cancer Council. More than forty-five people were gathered at the Multicultural Day Care Centre in Bankstown to help raise funds for Cancer Research, Education and Support programs for patients and their families.

In a warm and friendly atmosphere, speakers addressed the gathering, giving information about the wonderful job the Cancer Council is doing. Also, Ms Robyn William from the Women's Cancer Support Group at Bankstown Community Health Centre explained what the aims of this community service are, and the fantastic job that it does.

All members of the Greek OWN brought plenty of traditional Greek goodies to make the event more enjoyable, and raising \$2,000 for the Cancer Council once again proved that older women can contribute a lot, not only to their close families, but to the community in general to make this world a better place to live. Chrissie Gotis-Graham

### FACT SHEETS AVAILABLE

The Rural Women's Network has developed a set of ten fact sheets as part of the 'Older Women Out There' wellness project for women living in rural and remote areas of NSW. The information is basic and straightforward, with a number of references provided for anyone wanting to find out more. Topics covered include Managing Change, Grief and Loss, Taking Charge, Transport and Technology, Older Women's Wisdom, Body Image, Having a Voice, and several more.

These Info-Link Fact Sheets are available from the Women's Information and Referral Service (WIRS) freecall 1800 817 227. These sheets are also available in the OWN office at 87.

For more information about the Older Women Out There project contact the Rural Women's Network on Ph (02) 6391 3620, Fax (02) 6391 3650, Email <allison.windus@agric.nsw.gov.au>

Sam Smart

## The Housing Group

It became very obvious very early in the meeting that this was housing group Mark II or three or four in terms of the history of housing advocacy in OWN. Eventually we were a group of ten when the late-comers straggled in and one very late-comer - missing a train from Lawson is no easy thing to rectify quickly!

We introduced ourselves and did a circle of the table, telling each other why we had chosen Housing as one of the most important issues impacting on the lives of older women. Much of the talk centred on personal experiences.

One of us had an attempt to relocate to a retirement village and after having spent \$1,500 on lawyers fees was still living in her own home at a loss as to her next move. Several of the women present are tenants in public housing and have anxiety-provoking tales of waiting lists and dire need. Others had attempted to establish communal housing in one form or another and one had actually succeeded.

Many issues were isolated for our consideration, including homelessness, the particular problems of pensioners living in their own homes which can mean that because of the outlay on repairs they are less well-off than pensioners living as public tenants. The question of purpose-built housing and private ownership of communally owned housing, and also the issues associated with entering and living in retirement villages, were also raised and discussed.

As seems to be usual there are big issues, big problems and a lot of good ideas in women's minds about all of them.

We have decided to have another meeting for general discussion on 26 July 2000, at 11 am at 87 Lower Fort Street. We would like anyone else who is interested in the topic to join us and particularly those involved in the Supportive Neighbourhood groups.

Pam Ledden  
Advocacy Co-ordinator

### Enduring Guardianship Seminar

Legislation passed two years ago made enduring guardianship a legally binding document. Two cheerful women presented the details of Enduring Guardianship for the Office of the Public Guardian. Its benefits, what the guardianship can and cannot do were clearly described.

Essentially enduring guardianship allows you to appoint a trusted person to ensure that your wishes are followed should you later be unable to make decisions for yourself. This is in the area of medical treatment, services, care, lifestyle etc.

It enables you to plan ahead just as appointing someone as Power of Attorney carries out your wishes regarding your money and property in the case of later incapacity.

Our presenters were Amanda Curtin and Eileen Graham. Tel. 92651443.

OWN has details on file or contact The Office of the Public Guardian, Level 15,133 Castlereagh Street, Sydney 2000.

Tel (02) 92653184

Toll Free: 1800 451 510

Fax (02) 9283 2645.

## Theatre Group Report

What a busy month!

Our performance for, the Red Cross Volunteers Visitors Scheme, last month was a great success. Our "Wow 2000" show is aptly named. The audience loved the very topical songs and we certainly "Wowed" them. One of our number was too unwell to perform but, after being cared for by a handsome male nurse, was well enough to watch the show from the sidelines; a new experience.

The video of our Southern Highlands tour "Off the Beaten Track" was launched in May at the Mott Hall. It was great to renew friendships with the country women and Kate Loshe and Tashe Long and, to return – in a small way – the wonderful hospitality that was afforded us on the tour. The video was excellent and a credit to Digby Duncan, and her offsider, for their splendid work and for showing our "good sides". We closed the afternoon with a shortened version of our new show.

The next day, Redfern, for the Neighborhood Advisory Board and guests. The audience gave a resounding response to our show and later we feasted on bush tucker, kangaroo, crocodile and emu. What an experience! We, in our turn, thoroughly enjoyed the performance given by an Aboriginal Dance Group.

Central Station on Sunday morning, five of the Theatre Group, undaunted by the freezing weather awaiting the 7.10am train to Orange. On arrival at Orange we were met by Helen Kay, the Regional Violence Prevention Specialist, who was instrumental in organizing the Regional Domestic Violence Forum at which we were to perform the following day.

On awaking Monday morning we discovered a winter wonderland, everything covered with snow. This didn't stop us and off we went to our venue. Our audience was a mix of police officers, students, social workers, refuge workers and interested locals. Our violence segment was met with stunned silence. Later comments from the audience were "awe inspiring", "stunningly effective", and "inspirational" (from a man.)

The second part of our show was met with laughter, applause and a great appreciation of the words of our songs. As someone later remarked, "No-one is safe from you lot!"

We turned up as usual for rehearsal on Tuesday, tired but happy, Louise Anike, our director, took pity on us and gave us an early mark. "Fanks, mate."

Note: On Wednesday 5th July we are performing for E.C.H.O, the venue being the Waverley Library in Denison Street (between Ebley and Spring Streets) Bondi Junction. Time: 11.30am to 2pm. All are welcome.

Josie Jackson

### *REAL STARS!*

Did you catch Quantum on ABC TV on Thursday night? The topic was menopause. Lots of OWN members were interviewed for the show, and the Theatre Group shone brightly with a rousing rendition of Celebrate Your Age! We have a copy at OWN if you would like to borrow it.

### Conversation for the 21st Century

Conversations for the 21st Century is an initiative which brings people together to develop new attitudes and actions needed for a more sustainable, productive and compassionate community.

The next meeting is on Wednesday 19 July at 6.15p.m. at 141 Walker Street, Level 23, North Sydney.

By then we will have a new issue to deal with. Or perhaps you have some ideas you would like to discuss. Come along and bring your passion. Contribution \$5.00

The discussion has been, "In what ways can we as individuals make a difference in our community?"

By now we will have moved along from this issue and if you have something you'd like to put up for discussion, let us know.

Even if you can't come, you can contribute to this conversation by emailing your thoughts to [nwinterburn@conversations.com.au](mailto:nwinterburn@conversations.com.au) or phone Noel Winterburn on 9819 7914

This is an excellent place to start if you have not been to a conversation before. Bring a friend too.

web address <http://www.conversations.com.au/c21c>

## **Aged Care accommodation: what is important to me?**

Most people will live in their own home all their life, but there are a small percentage of people who need to move into a nursing home, hostel, or other aged care home.

To find suitable accommodation for someone always start with the Aged Care Assessment worker or hospital social worker.

Once you have been provided with the information from the Aged Care Assessment Team (the type of care for which your family member has been approved) you will need to look around the various residences which are in the area you choose. It is important to look at as many sites as possible, just as you would when buying or renting a house.

When looking at different sites, consider

- \* the environment that you want
- \* special services, e.g. physiotherapy, rehabilitation services
- \* access to and from the facility, e.g., buses and trains
- \* recreational interests
- \* special and extra services, e.g., library, swimming pool
- \* religious and cultural services
- \* the waiting period
- \* the costs

At the Seniors' Information Service 131244 there have plenty of brochures and booklets to help you to make these decisions. They have booklets with lists of nursing homes in different areas of NSW, and a leaflet with the way to calculate costs for nursing homes and hostels.

## **Questions of Transport**

The third meeting of the Transport Group was held on 23 May. The discussion at this meeting was about working toward a focus for the group, thinking about what needs to be done and what it is that we think we can do effectively.

We talked very much about our own experiences with the transport system and what we had heard from other people. We realised that there is still very much that we need to find out before we can focus our efforts on this issue and have decided to try accessing information from the Road Transport Authority, State Rail and the Department of Transport.

We are also seeking more speakers who can give us information on the structure and function of the various transport providers and the various interest groups that have an input into policy.

We are interested in hearing from members about which particular aspect of 'Transport' we should focus on. If you have an opinion about it please phone Ermes Solari at OWN on Wednesdays or Pam Ledden on Mondays, ph 9247 7046.

Pam Ledden

## **ABORIGINAL SUPPORT CIRCLE**

The Harbour Bridge walk was uppermost in all our minds. Betty Little and I met right after she was interviewed by SBS TV, and I remained with her and her group the rest of the way. Betty was carrying a large Aboriginal Flag on a pole, and her group were carrying placards. Along the way, people were coming up to speak to her.

Unfortunately, the OWN group were not able to get together at North Sydney. I, for one, had to begin the walk from Milson's Point. We all shared the friendliness of everyone and the electric spirit, the feeling of anger with John Howard for not being SORRY and the fact that it was a catalyst for increasing the crowd. Though there was a virtual river of people flowing in front and to the back with no end in sight on either end, there was no feeling of being crowded or pushed. It was as if we all belonged in the flow - young and old of all colours, shapes and sizes.

Betty and I met Lynn Pollack and the ESORA group. Betty told us she joined her Koori friends for the rest of the day. Monique had walked with friends from her Aboriginal Study course. Margaret Brennan and Margaret Walker also walked. Margaret Walker also was interviewed on television. I was interviewed by Lola Forester on SBS radio. Unfortunately, Pat Zinn had to watch the proceedings on television, as she hurt her knee. Lucy was watching from Orange, as she was with the Theatre Group.

Betty Little is giving OWN a cabinet for the Ruth Layard Library, and Ruth's husband, Peter, has donated another thirty books. The books are still being organised.

In June, our speaker will be Susan Phillips, a lawyer (see FLYER) and in August, Elaine Russell, an artist and author, will speak.

Frayda Cooper

## **Creative Movement Workshop at the Bangarra Dance Performing Space – Part of a Weekend Workshop for Dance**

There are no doubts; the power and potency of dance was present on Saturday as we were joined in our creative movement workshop by people from all over Australia: people from the ACT, Adelaide, Brisbane, far corners of NSW and Queensland and Darwin.

This was a weekend of workshops and we were delighted that Ellin Krinsley asked us to participate and present our creative movement.

Were the spirits of the Bangarra Dance Company in the studio extolling us to extend and communicate with each other? Or was it that music and movement free us from everyday concerns? Aches and pains were put aside and we were filled with delight as we moved and expressed something of our inner selves.

It was a special time and evident from the remarks after the workshop that the people who danced with us found it special too. Sharing the dance with younger women is always an experience to be treasured.

One of the dancers said that one does not need to have professional training to dance. From earliest times people have expressed their culture and themselves through dance. Dance can express many feelings that are sometimes difficult to express in words. It stretches and releases tension from our bodies and imparts a sense of wellbeing.

Age is no barrier to making movement, perhaps becoming gentler, more undemanding as we grow older.

I thank you Ellin for the opportunities you give us to enjoy and become aware of our bodies and what we can achieve.

Mollie Smith

## WOMEN'S RECONCILIATION NETWORK

On Monday, 22nd May, the beginning of Reconciliation Week, members of the Women's Reconciliation Network met in Victoria Park, Chippen-  
dale, to light candles and meditate on reconcilia-  
tion. Together we stated this vision:

We open our hearts to the experience of others,  
We accept our traditional wisdoms,  
We acknowledge the past,  
We heal ourselves  
And we teach others.

We linked up with a group in Adelaide who gathered for the same purpose. I think we were really representative of Australia today - an Aboriginal woman and her daughter, a Torres Strait Island grandmother, young mothers with young children, older women, some born in Australia, others originally from places as diverse as the Phillipines, Israel, Indonesia, New Zealand and South Africa.

I like to think that small reconciliation groups all over Australia, united in a common purpose, are gradually raising consciousness, and that is why the Bridge Walk on Sunday, 28th May, was such an outstanding success.

Please join us on Tuesday, 8th August (World Indigenous Day) for our annual Spirit Event, where you will participate in amazing experiences. (Venue to be announced later.) Pat Zinn

### WORD PLAY

My father oft' would meditate  
Upon a small invertebrate  
Who, in manner inappropriate,  
Had mired a page of his vulgate,  
Which sate upon a lectern straight.

Now how could he anticipate  
Activity so profligate?  
Meanwhile the choir did ululate  
In tones both sweet and disparate.

Yet he longed to viscerate  
Or, failing that, to urticate  
This creature unregenerate.  
His plan he would not abrogate  
To slay this small invertebrate.

Judith Mustard

## OLD AGE

"Old age is the shrinking of mind and body - it has no dignity."

I find this statement a challenge to all I believe for I know the mind is in a constant state of growth. In old age it has reached the ultimate state in which ideas of all kinds flourish. There is time to contemplate, to wonder, to simply sit and stare for the mind can choose which path to travel. It can wander through space, wonder at the magnitude of the universe, freed of all restraints it can imagine anything.

An old mind and body has adapted to modern technology in a way unknown to previous generations. Our minds do not change, only other people's perception of them.

In the old body, externally, there are signs of great character, an acceptance of what cannot be changed and a determination to continue living.

"It has no dignity" - look and see the true dignity of a generation which has seen much and survived much.

Joan Hook

### A BIT OF NONSENSE

CHIN: has now increased to two or three  
I do not need  
Oh dearie me!

ARMS: Perform many a task  
Without them, life a farce.

BREASTS: Once firm and fine  
Now in decline.

LEGS: Trusty limbs stay on the floor  
Do not forsake this body poor.

TOES: Whatever goes  
These are my toes  
Enough you say  
Of my prose.

Joan Hook

## EFFICIENCY PLUS?

Monday, 10am. Exasperated with my wall phone, which keeps telling me to “check the number and dial again” and has been doing so for weeks, I ring to report the problem. Four menus, press this, press that. I finally get through to an operator. Yes, they will replace the phone, I can pick it up from the nearest post office. I explain that it is a wall phone, and I really don’t know how to attach it. An arrangement is made for someone to call to fit it for me. He will come about 5pm.

10.20. Phone rings. Technician says he will be here in about ten minutes with new phone.

10.23. Door bell. Technician has arrived with phone. A very pleasant young man. I remark that I wasn’t expecting him till about 5pm. He says he hasn’t got much work to do, that’s why he’s early. He fits the phone. The ringer doesn’t work. He goes to his van to get another one. Fits it to the wall. Obviously thinks this little old lady couldn’t possibly know how to store the numbers, so he will kindly do it for her. I don’t object. He means well. He stores the numbers, and leaves.

After he has gone, I write the names on the little slip that indicates which button the number is stored on. I can’t use it, as the plastic cover is missing which holds the paper in place.

I ring again. Once again, four menus to plough through. A frosty operator says she can’t possibly get the technician back straight away, but he will call some time during the day with the plastic cover.

Tuesday, 8.15am. Once again, I wade through the four menus. I tell my story to the operator, a very nice sounding young woman, and ask if the plastic cover can be brought to me. Long delay while she puts me on hold. She returns eventually. They can’t just give me the plastic cover. They will bring me a whole new phone tomorrow...

Wednesday, still no phone

Thursday, 9.30 am. I ring once again. The phone didn’t come yesterday, where is it? I am told it will definitely arrive today.

Friday, 9.30 am. I repeat my story to a young male operator who leaves me on hold for a while, comes back to the phone to tell me I really don’t have to have a new phone, I can pick up the plastic cover from any Telstra shop... Which I did.

Renee Simons

## IF NOISE ANNOYS, YOU ARE NOT ALONE

It’s Tuesday May 29 and I am deciding not to attend the launch of ‘Off the Beaten Track’. Last week I was looking forward to it, now it seems all too much. Am I becoming older? Wanting to be a recluse? I hope not. But I am becoming increasingly reluctant to go where others congregate. At concerts and plays I remain in the auditorium during intervals rather than join the throngs in the foyers. Visits to supermarkets have always been nightmarish, but they are becoming more so.

Resolved to stay away from Mott Hall, I settle for a good read, an autobiography, P D James’ *Time to be in Earnest*. This genre, biography and autobiography becomes more pleasurable as one ages, especially if the subjects are one’s contemporaries and still alive. You often find attitudes and experiences paralleling your own. And this happens this afternoon. P D James wrote this in her 77th year and I come across an account of what has been my recent experience at social gatherings.

She has been to a dinner party, enjoyable but exhausting. ‘I realise now that I cannot tolerate being battered by a cacophony of shouting voices, but it is difficult to know what to do about it.’ She continues to relate a son-in-law’s explanation. He is a neuro-scientist and explains that in youth the human brain is able to distinguish between the sounds that it wishes to receive and others, thus shuts out loud background noise. With age, we lose this ability.

The writer goes on to complain of all the noise that assaults city dwellers, though London seems worse than Sydney; the young here must have better ear-phones as the noise in our trains seems only to come from those ubiquitous mobile phones and no one seems to shout into them. P D J being a successful writer does not seem to need to shop in supermarkets.

So, although I have missed the fun at Mott Hall this afternoon, at least I know why and that in this I am not alone. Still, it’s difficult to know what to do about it.

Helen Monaghan

# notice

## OSTEOPOROSIS STUDY

Royal North Shore Hospital, Rheumatology Department, is seeking women to participate in a one year Osteoporosis Study. All participants will receive active medication and must be:

- \* Aged 65 to 80 years
- \* Able to walk
- \* Not previously diagnosed with osteoporosis

For more information please contact  
**Lesley Hawkins on 9926 7379**

## Check it Out!

If you aren't sure whether a story or information is true, check it out on the **urban legends website**:

<http://urbanlegends.about.com/science/urbanlegends/>

## Kind Shoe Shops for Tired Feet

Research Shoes  
Dymocks Building

Markell Shoe centre  
Bondi Junction

Just Comfort  
Burwood

Jaede Comfort and Fit  
Strathfield

## THE LOST CULTURE OF WOMEN'S LIBERATION 1969-1974

### 'THE PRE-DYNASTIC PHASE'

Suzanne Bellamy, well known artist will be giving a humorous presentation on the Lost Culture of Women's Liberation, 1969-1974. Suzanne has cast herself as an archaeologist 500 years into the future (doing a dig on 67 Glebe Pt Road - the site of the first Women's Liberation House) looking back at the origins of Women's Liberation in the early seventies.

This project has been constructed as a museum-like installation, with constructed models, artefacts, slides, controversies about dating systems, climate change, why the site was abandoned, what was eaten, the sexual practices, dress, ritual practices and the kinds of archaeological approach which gets things just a little bit wrong - which is the source of much of the humour and satire in the show.

Suzanne's presentation is a seriously comic look at the journey from there to here. It works on many levels - educational and historical, comic and fantastical - and aims both to re-ignite interest in the crucial ideas period of contemporary feminism, and find a bridge between earlier and contemporary ideas in the Women's Movement.

WHEN: Sunday, 27 August, 2000

2:30 pm - 6pm

**Afternoon tea served**

WHERE: Family Planning Association

328 Liverpool Rd., Ashfield

COST: \$10/ \$7

Disabled access, free car parking available, bus route-464, 466, 480, 483 from Central, only 300 metres from Ashfield station.

For further information please contact Robyn Plaister on 93388975 (W) or 98107574(H) or email: [rplaister@fairtrading.nsw.gov.au](mailto:rplaister@fairtrading.nsw.gov.au).

# board

## Lunchtime Chat in the City

Lunchtime Chat in the City  
12:30pm Wednesday 12 July

This will advance the conversation on 'Reconciliation' in it's many guises. However the topic could take unexpected turns at any moment. And often does.

St James Ethics Centre. Level 2, 140  
Sussex Street, City.

## SURVEY ON ELECTRONIC BANKING

The Joint Committee on Corporations and Securities is conducting an inquiry into electronic bank fees and will be conduct hearings in July and August.

The Financial and Consumer Rights Council is also collecting community opinion about these issues through an internet survey.

A survey form is also available at OWN, so please phone and we will send it out, or log onto:  
<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~fcrc/surveys/banking/>

## Pearlies Life Writing Classes

If you attended the first or second class at OWN, and would like to have some (privately arranged) follow-up sessions with Pearlie, please phone Dorothy Cora  
9247 7046

## WANTED

An Editor for the Sydney  
OWN Newsletter.

For more information,  
please phone  
Judith Mustard  
9247 7046  
or  
9560 2668

## FEET

Feet.  
Not neat  
Or petite,  
In fact, large plates of meat.  
In smart shoes constricted  
(such pain inflicted)  
for years to complain  
unheeded, in vain,  
To what purpose attain  
The fashionable look?

Now, misshapen and crooked,  
Spread out to retire,  
Flat-footed freedom  
Their sole desire.

Alita Tanswell

## MEMBERSHIP OF THE OLDER WOMEN'S NETWORK IS OPEN TO ALL OLDER WOMEN.

### Annual fees:

Membership, including Newsletter.....\$20.00

Newsletter only (for Gov't Depts.  
institutions and organisations) .....\$25.00

Send your cheque, name, address and phone number to:  
Older Women's Network, 87 Lower Fort Street, Millers Point 2000

Tel: (02) 9247 7046 Fax: (02) 9247 4202 email: [ownnsw@zip.com.au](mailto:ownnsw@zip.com.au)  
Web site: <http://www.zip.com.au/~ownnsw>