



OWN MATTERS

Newsletter of the Older Women's Network New South Wales

Vol.3 No.10 – November 2006

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Position, Position

October has been a month of change and action. As you will see from the range of material in this month's newsletter, our members have crossed the country, and in some cases, oceans, to expand our networks and reach new horizons. This has been a very expansive month for OWN Sydney! Thanks also to a change of fortune in the allocation of the City of Sydney Community Grants – and some fabulous support from Clover Moore, we will be able to proceed with one of our pilot projects in 2007 - to explore and expand the networks for older women in the City of Sydney.

This will mean tracking down that special older woman who can make magic happen. We'll be adding to our team (see Position Advertisement on page 8) a woman who can be both the researcher and the conduit for a network that's expanding, demanding and exciting. We're serious when we listed the demands in their order on page 8, 'cause if you're not passionate about older women and their capacity to live, grow and embrace life, you need not apply!

We've also developed a very productive relationship with Volunteering NSW, and we've been able to welcome a number of new recruits to our membership at Millers Point. Our new volunteers have come at a time when we're establishing a support network for women who may be at, or near retirement age, but may still want to be - or need to be - connected to the workforce. Volunteering offers a great way to bridge that gap because it allows for a self-determined flexibility, and yet gives many of the advantages of the workplace, including social connectivity and on-going training.

Having recently overhauled our entire computer hardware and software network, we are now in a position where the more volunteers who step forward for training, the more productive our network will be. Sharing skills and exchanging knowledge is a privilege that can be tailored to suit the individual volunteer, as long as the commitment to the organisation is sincere, we all stand to benefit and grow in strength and understanding.

For OWN Sydney this is an enormously exciting time, for OWN NSW this pilot will provide an insight that will assist other groups further enhance their communication and networking. Volunteers are the lifeblood of this organisation. Establishing effective networks, sub-committees and deciding on future topics of interest and advocacy, stems from the work of volunteers, who must all be members of OWN. Who knows, with all these new members/volunteers knocking on our door, maybe one will hold the key to this new position?

Beth Eldridge

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Produced with the assistance of the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care

with project funding from the NSW Department of Health and assistance from the City of Sydney

Who Are We?

The Older Women's Network (OWN) NSW is the peak body for 20 groups in NSW. OWN promotes the rights, dignity and wellbeing of older women through a range of activities and resources, and advocates on issues of interest and concern to older women.

OWN Matters is the news-letter of the Older Women's Network NSW. It is published 11 times a year. The annual subscription for individuals is \$22 and \$40 for organisations & includes GST.

Members of OWN groups in NSW are encouraged to contribute to *OWN Matters* with items of interest to older women and Letters to the Editor. They can be sent by mail or email marked Attention – Editorial Team. Please include contact details. Contributions must be received by the second Tuesday of each month.

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ABN 36 992 030 904

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POINT of VIEW

Dear Old School Days, Golden Rule Days

Heated swimming pools and car parking ? Do you mind?

Such niceties seem almost compulsory in private schools. And what are the results of this costly and cosy education with all the frills?

It seems strange that so many of the male students know that when it comes to a career it is so very important that they should be one of the old boys and have a right to wear the old school tie. It's further dismaying to know that so many of them became politicians frantically holding onto their political salaries and superannuation entitlements plus the other considerable perks which include lifelong free travel. A number become directors or are elevated to be a C.E.O. demanding and receiving an astronomical salary plus a bonus of money or shares. The retrenchment of thousands of employees for reasons of economy while paying the managing director, or similar, a whopping pay is colossal hypocrisy.

Just think how many now-older people went to public schools, saw bare-footed pupils, children who came to school with jam sandwiches for lunch with never a piece of fruit. Female teachers stayed unmarried, being forced to choose between a legal partnered way of life, or getting sacked.

There were compulsory weekly parades of Saluting the Flag and declaring our allegiance to king, country and the flag. There were no rules to wear a school uniform with school colours and no school tie.

We were fortunate to have the opportunity to learn the vital skills of being able to read, write and do sums, all without paying for it. The methodology was different and, with all its failings, proved to be efficient. Most of us went on to earn our living without the benefit of tertiary education.

While private schools are swimming in money, one of this government's first actions was to de-fund Australian Superannuants and Pensioners Federation.

The difference between the children of the battlers and the pampered offspring of the well-to-do and the rich have established a different and undesirable kind of golden rules these days. Those who have the gold set the rules.

Louise Anike

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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 NSW

Coordinators' Report

September saw the last quarterly meeting of the year. To say it was a meeting is a bit misleading as there were no minutes taken and no sitting around the table. Instead, we opened with a welcome from Beth followed by Debbie Hodgkis leading the *Sutherland International Dancing Group* in some very well performed International Folk Dances.

The groups reports started off with an inspiring talk from Silvana Gruber from Bankstown Wellness who held us all in the palm of her hand as she went through the amazing variety of activities inspired by the diversity of the cultural backgrounds of the women of that area.

Roma Bates and Norah Alexander entertained us with song before presenting their news. All the news is reported in another part of *OWN Matters* so we won't go into details here but must tell you of Roma's pain at the feeling of ineffectiveness she feels after seeing the moving documentary, "*Blowing in The Wind*." For those of you who have not seen the doco, we urge you to do so to learn the way the Australian Government has slipped through permission for the Americans to test their "weapons of mass destruction" on Australian soil and allow the poison from these tests to blow in the wind over Australian citizens. Not for the short term, but for a twenty year period. Why do we allow this to happen? Where are the grandmothers voices that the Theatre Group sing about? Don't sit on our hands, look at the documentary, spread the word and try to stop this insanity.

The rest of Illawarra's news had us all smiling as we examined their '*Draw a Cow*' workshop artwork, which was most revealing. Get a group of women, some paper and pencils and ask them to draw just one small section of a cow before passing it on to the next person and you give birth to some very interesting animals! Including a cow with

two udders drawn by a woman who figured as we had two breasts a cow probably does too. Barbara Malcolm says this would never happen in Wollondilly where cows seem to look over every fence. Apparently one even helped to solve murder - if you would like to know more about that, ask Barbara to fill you in.

Pat Zinn's positive news about what is happening in the Aboriginal community was also inspiring. There **are** good things happening. You read lots of negative things about our Indigenous people and very little about the work being done with dedication and humor by so many people. Pat Zinn is a true inspiration to us all. I urge you all to pencil in the 13th February as our first quarterly meeting of the New Year. Get the year off to a good start and be inspired!

On a sadder note, for the second month in a row we did not have a quorum at the Management Team meeting so were unable to make any formal decisions or officially induct Brenda Hodgkinson onto our team. The fact that there were not seven people at the meeting shows how serious the situation is, and that it needs to be rectified asap. The work still goes on, the new coordinators are working well together. Betty Johnson continues to amaze us all with her extraordinary energy as an ambassador and advocate for OWN and the rights of older women.

The year is winding down. The Melbourne Cup is almost upon us and Christmas parties are being planned. The summer promises to be very hot, bush fires in our regional areas and water restrictions are bound to get stricter. The women of OWN will press on, we will continue our wellness practices, combat invisibility and social isolation, and tell the government what we think while we work towards a better deal for all citizens, especially older women.

Margaret Holland & Barbara Malcolm

Laughter Workshop 6th November

Laughter is the shortest distance between two people. It is also good for your body and your mind, so come and join me at 10am on Monday 6th November at 87 Lower Fort Street. We'll have a good old laugh together, following the Sydney Quarterly Meeting.

Regards Renate

Call the office on 9247 7046 to register.

We Can Help You If You Have Shopping Problems

- Our Community Centre supplies two low-cost services to meet those needs.
- 1. A specialized shopping and delivery service to people who are housebound, ill, aged or infirm.
- 2. A passenger-shopper bus service with a trip assistant that leaves the centre every Thursday morning, picking up local passengers. It then goes to a local shopping centre. After 2 hours there, the bus returns the passenger-shoppers to their home with their groceries.
- The cost of either service is \$4
- For further information about either of these services and the areas we cover, please contact **Kings Cross Community & Information Centre** tel:9357 2164 email:kxcc@bigpond.com

Aboriginal Support Circle Issues

Good News Story — Opportunity for Aboriginal Youth

After extensive research, planning and discussion, January, 2006 saw the opening of Tirkandi Inaburra Cultural and Development Centre Inc — a unique initiative funded primarily by the Attorney General's Department of NSW. It is run by the Aboriginal community, working cooperatively with all levels of government and the private sector, with the aim of reducing the number of Aboriginal male youths who have contact with the criminal justice system. At present more than 50% of inmates in NSW juvenile justice centres are Aboriginal.

Tirkandi Inaburra Cultural and Development Centre is situated south of Griffith on 780 hectares of Crown Land, between the NSW townships of Coleambally and Darlington Point. It provides 16 residential places at a time for three to six months for Aboriginal male youths aged from 12 to 15 years. They must apply, be keen to attend, and have their families/carers consent. The boys are drawn from regional areas within the catchment area and Aboriginal Elders play a major role by instilling in them a stronger sense of cultural identity.

The development consists of two residences for youth, a learning centre, an administration/counselling area, family stay cabins, a manager's residence and recreational and farm infrastructure.

Meaning "to learn to dream", Tirkandi Inaburra provides schooling with a strong focus on literacy and numeracy and a range of vocational and cultural programs targeted to individual needs. They are designed to improve the boys' self-esteem and resilience, and to strengthen skills, enabling them to take advantage of employment opportunities and to be proud of their Aboriginal culture. Ultimately, to take responsibility for their own lives when they return to their communities.

Schooling is on site with two teachers and two assistants, employed by the Education Department through Coleambally Central School, which provides more intensive learning support than is usually possible. There are exit plans and a mentor for

each graduate. Most graduates rate their experience as positive and many boys want to return or remain for a 6-month period.

Andrew, one of the Term 1 graduates, expresses his feelings in a poem called *There and Here*. "There" is pre-Tirkandi Inaburra and "Here" is Tirkandi Inaburra, which clearly shows the impact of the centre on him. In "There" Andrew expresses his anger and disappointment e.g.:

"When you gave up on me,
I gave up on you and your teaching"

In "Here" Andrew writes of his journey to respect — his Elders, grandparents, parents and himself and goes on to write:

"Here I respect
So, when I return
I will continue to respect,
It will take strength and courage, but I don't
want trouble: I will respect".

June West

*(From information provided by Attorney
Generals Department NSW)*

Utopia in the Desert

'Shuffle, shuffle, cough, cough. Remember that is the correct approach to people out here Mum', said my daughter Susanna. She was teaching at Utopia, an Aboriginal community 250 km from Alice Springs and we needed to collect the census papers from Lindsay Bird an elder in the Community and a famous painter. So we quietly shuffled and coughed our way across the red desert sand to Lindsay's home a half circle of corrugated iron sheltering a small fire from the wind. Mavis, Lindsay's wife sat on the ground cross legged pushing potatoes around in the coals. Nearby her daughter was breast feeding her baby. Various members of the family and the usual dogs completed the scene. I sat on the only piece of furniture - an old iron bed.

I talked to Lindsay about his exhibitions in Canberra, London. and New York but he was more interested in the sports meeting coming up and who was to pay for the diesel to get to Mulga Bore 150 km up the road.



Aboriginal Community Issues

I asked if he could show me any of his paintings. Turning, he pulled a rolled up canvas from the limb of an old bedraggled Mulga bush. It was large and stunning - painted on the ground of course, with a faint imprint of a dog's paw in the corner.

'Too windy to paint today' he commented.

We eventually got around to the census papers. None had been filled in as Lindsay couldn't write.

Ages were difficult. They don't celebrate birthdays.

'As old as my Mum?' Susanna asked'. 'No'. As old as I am?' 'No'.

Eventually we arrived at an approximate figure.

When it came to filling in 'How many bedrooms in your home?' Lindsay said 'Two'.

Everyone in that community lived in a two bedroom home according to the census paper. I looked at the crescent of corrugated iron, the camp bed, and smiled. They would have had a 'whitey' suburban home somewhere but Mr. Round The World Lindsay Bird preferred the open air, the red earth and a piece of corrugated iron.

Joan Johns

CORRECTION

In my article on Oenpelli I said that the Yolngu people lived there. That is not right. They live in Eastern Arnhem Land. My apologies to them.

Joan Johns

Terra Nullius in Redfern

There have always been Haves and Have-nots. Nobody knows that better than our own Aboriginals, who have always been part of the latter category, but even they were confounded by what they see as the blatant racism of the Liberal-Labour Development Coalition (LLDC) in their recent decision on the development of Redfern.

While large developers have received the nod to erect housing on adjacent (Government-owned) lands, the LLDC has allowed only about three-quarters of the Aboriginal Housing Company's (AHC) application to rebuild private houses on land known

as The Block. This is Aboriginal-owned land, the centre of the Aboriginal community in New South Wales, significant to their identity.

So the Redfern Plan increases the number of dwellings on government-owned land and at the same time reduces the number of dwellings to be built on adjacent freehold black-owned land. It begs the question, Why?

It cannot be for heritage sensitivity since this has been waived in Redfern. It doesn't concern the environment. Can it be, as some members of the local community think, founded in racism and greed? Does the state government believe they will make more money from the mini metropolis they are planning if they restrict the number of Aboriginal families living nearby?

The Planning Minister, Frank Sartor, has approved this unjust decision. The AHC have sought support - or at least an objection to the Sartor decision - from the local MP, Clover Moore, but to date have had no response. Tom Uren, whose federal ministry deeded the land to the AHC, is appalled by the plan and has made representations to the cabinet without success.

In a speech to the NSW Parliament House Reconciliation Forum on 20 September 2006, Aboriginal Elder and AHC Chief Executive, Michael Mundine, said:

'Our project offers the only real hope of creating a healthy and prosperous Aboriginal community in the heart of Sydney [but] the Government is pushing to mainstream Aboriginal services in Redfern. They are taking away our identity and stopping our people from climbing out of poverty.

'We are not asking for a handout...in fact the project is self-funded. We are asking for the same development rights as other land owners in Redfern.

'Ask yourselves - if we were proposing new houses for non-Indigenous people would anyone in the NSW Government object?'

If you feel strongly about this plan, please write to or email State Planning Minister Frank Sartor (478 Princes Highway, Rockdale, 2216; www.rockdale@parliament.nsw.gov.au) or Clover Moore, MP, (58 Oxford Street, Paddington; www.bligh@parliament.nsw.gov.au).

Lorraine Inglis & Helen Young



Aboriginal Support Circle Issues

Another Black Death in Custody - Justice at Last?

On 19 November, 2004, 36-year old Mulrunji died in police custody after being arrested for intoxication by Senior Sergeant Chris Hurley who was accompanied by Police Liaison Officer Lloyd Bengaroo. (It is customary for the name of the deceased Indigenous person not to be mentioned).

Acting Queensland Coroner Christine Clements, in delivering her findings to the Queensland Government, stated that Mulrunji's arrest for drunkenness was inappropriate, that Senior Sergeant Hurley had caused Mulrunji's fatal injuries, and that the police investigation into the death did not meet police standards as demanded by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, which was set up fifteen years ago after 99 Aboriginal people had died in custody. She found that Senior Sergeant Hurley had punched Mulrunji three times in the stomach and the force was so severe that his liver was split in two against his spine. She said that "no person in authority has ever been charged over a black death in custody and we expect charges to follow."

Police Commissioner Bob Atkinson had declined to suspend or sack Senior Sergeant Hurley, however the latter agreed to stand down pending a decision by the Director of Public Prosecutions on whether to charge him.

At the courtroom it was a landmark day for Indigenous people throughout Australia, with Ms. Clements accepting the evidence of several Aboriginal witnesses above that given by Senior Sergeant Hurley to police at a previous sitting of the inquest.

Queensland Premier, Peter Beattie, has announced a high-level response group to respond to the matter raised by Ms. Clements. The Council for Civil Liberties wants contempt charges to be laid against Police Union president, Gary Wilkinson, who accused the Acting Coroner of a "witch hunt". Labor M.P. for Townsville and State Minister for Child Safety Mike Reynolds has supported the Palm Island community, expressing concern that, in the past,

child safety officers, nurses and other professionals had been stood down for much less serious allegations.

It is a disgrace that the Queensland Government has yet to properly implement a significant number of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody's 339 recommendations. Australia has the highest Indigenous imprisonment rate of any OECD country. Indigenous people make up 22% of the Australian prison population compared with 2.4% of the general population. Of the 67 deaths in custody countrywide in 2004, 20% were Indigenous, yet the Indigenous population is only approximately 2%. The most significant contributing factor to Indigenous people coming into contact with the criminal justice system remains their disadvantaged and unequal position within wider society.

Forty recommendations were made after the court findings, including that arrest should be a last resort. Rather, a caution could be given or proceedings could be started by a notice to appear in court, or a summons. Diversionary centres are urgently needed to provide alternatives to police custody for people who are drunk or disorderly. It was noted that there is lack of training in protocol for Police Officers and a lack of appropriate training for officers in the conduct of health assessments of people in custody. Interpreters and support persons are also needed.

Palm Islanders held a candlelit vigil on the island's esplanade to honour the memory of Mulrunji on the evening that the Acting Coroner's findings were handed down. A Palm Island resident, Florence Onus, said "This is a historical decision and one that Indigenous Australians have been waiting for since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. This has also given us hope and faith that justice is finally being served for all those who have died in custody and for the family of Mulrunji Doomadgee."

Pat Zinn



At and Beyond the Rocks

Sydney

Our movers and shakers have been moving all over the place the last few months. I don't only mean those who were wowing them at the annual conference. Of those I know about, Judith, stayed to further enjoy WA. We have Renate in Uzbekistan, Anne and Sharon in Europe, Mary and Judith in NT, Marjorie has been in Melbourne and I think a few others have been gadding about too. Some of us out there are enjoying the world and a few of us are getting their strength back together, but we continue to gain new members here in Sydney. A few of them have volunteered to help with the myriad of tasks that need to be done which is great. Our Quarterly Meeting is coming up on Monday, 6 November. This will be one to laugh and giggle at, because it includes the Laughter Workshop run by Renate who is racing back from Uzbekistan just for us, so come along and enjoy yourself. And speaking of enjoying, we will have all journeyed to Mott Hall on Saturday 28th for the performance of the OWN NSW Theatre Group, which I'm sure will have us talking for months.

The smaller groups which are part of Sydney OWN continue to enrich our lives, and contribute to our strength and diversity. The Inner West Network Group is not restricted to women of that area - it just meets in Leichhardt. We have had some interesting discussions, and have formed a network group which is there to provide help for our members should they need it. Our book club is enjoying their reading and discussions and new friendships

have formed. We organise dinner out for the second Thursday each month, and this month was at *Mancinis* in Summer Hill. Good food, good wine, and good company. Next dinner is planned for *Holy Cow* at Surry Hills. We have a group of not-long, and yet-to-be retirees, who meet once a month. Last month we discussed and voted to take the name Jubilation for our group. (I feel I should explain that one. The Spanish word for retirement is *jubilacion*, and sounds more like we hope it will be!). This month Bev Cameron gave a talk and lead a fantastic discussion on retirement and this was really fruitful, and raised many issues amongst our members. One quote mentioned was from Mahatma Ghandi, and received our endorsement as a great theme for retirement: "*Live as though you were to die tomorrow. Learn as though you were to live forever.*" We are going to follow up with some of those issues important to our members at our November meeting. Our December meeting will be a solstice party. We have also decided that we would like to further develop relationships and friendships, and have begun to arrange all kinds of great fun. Jubilation is growing and evolving and we are letting our members' interests lead us.

In January we will try to organise groups to meet for various music events in the Domain. We have nourished our minds with discussion, and our spirits with music, so now for our bodies. For those of us of moderate fitness, the Walking Class Women, are beginning some Twilight Walks in November,

and we hope to make this a monthly event in summer. Our first walk is in Tempe, so we can finish up at the Harp Hotel for a cup of coffee or other liquid refreshment. A holistic approach, so our network develops in many directions, but it contributes to the greater good of our members.

Lorraine Inglis

City of Sydney Project

To further the presence of older women in the City of Sydney, OWN Sydney applied for - and has been granted - \$10,000 to hold "*A pilot project to explore and enhance the process of information sharing, networking and community participation for older women residents in the City of Sydney.*" The project will be held from February to June 2007 and will employ a community development worker two days a week. We already have good experiences to draw on from OWN groups and the Inner-West group but we also want to tap the ideas of other local older women of this changing and expanding city.

An invitation to become part of the planning committee has been extended to the Working Group and City of Sydney members who will meet for the first time at the end of October. A report will conclude the project and will hopefully be of value to other OWNs and older people's organisations. If you are interested you might give Joy a call on 9698 5205.

OWN S has almost 50 members living in the City of Sydney LGA,

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS * NEWS FROM THE GROUPS * NEWS FROM THE GROUPS * NEWS FROM THE GROUPS * NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

At and Beyond the Rocks

some in the heart of the city and others across to its boundaries - Millers Point to St. Peters, Glebe to Rushcutters Bay. Recently Clover spoke in NSW Parliament on our ageing population, making particular reference to OWN as a model for older people and was particularly supportive of OWN's Wellness projects. (see this page for the extract of that speech). We're looking forward to having an input into Council's concept of its City of Villages.

Joy Ross



Thank you

A big 'Thank you' to all those who have given me their loving support in my recent round of surgery. Am looking forward to being back on deck in January when the treatments are finished.

Much love, Joy Ross

FANTASTIC NEW POSITION AT OWN - FOR THE RIGHT WOMAN

Older Women's Network, Sydney, with financial help from the City of Sydney, has *'a pilot project to explore and enhance the process of information sharing, networking and community participation for older women residents of the City of Sydney'*.

We are looking for an older woman (50 years plus) for part time work.

This would be for two days per week for six months, commencing February, 2007.

She should –

1. Be passionate about older women and their capacity to live, grow and embrace life.
2. Know and love the City of Sydney.
3. Understand networking and communicate well with other older women.
4. Have the ability to locate information about services available and how to access them.
5. Have the ability to use a computer – at least the internet and Word.

For information about what the work entails and conditions of employment contact the Older Women's Network 87 Lower Fort St Millers Point, 2000

Phone: 9247 7046 email : info@ownnsw.org.au web: www.ownnsw.org.au

GO, CLOVER!

Recently in Parliament I called on the Government to invest in programs for older people that help them remain active, healthy and a valued part of the community.

The proportion of people aged over 65 is expected to more than double over the next few decades. As the 1998-2003 NSW Healthy Ageing Framework says, "Healthy ageing keeps all older people involved in society and enables their ongoing independence, participation and quality of life." Currently 19 per cent of carers are aged over 65 and volunteerism is expected to increase with the aging population. An ageing population could inspire a renewed force in community and welfare services.

I called on the government to support healthy/active ageing and prevention programs. Research shows that social support, and gentle physical and mental activity greatly increases health and reduces the need for support services. Active engaged older people can also contribute to welfare and community support.

The Older Women's Network NSW (OWN) provides an exceptional model for healthy ageing programs, emphasising wellness instead of illness and encouraging members to stay healthy, stay connected, keep their dignity, and contribute their experience and wisdom to society. The network has 20 groups in New South Wales, four wellness centres, and approximately 1,500 older women engaging in programs planned and organised by them, including gentle exercise, falls prevention and nutrition.

A small grant enabled the

At and Beyond the Rocks

network to run health workshops on issues of concern like elder abuse, financial problems, depression, grieving, social isolation, housing, and transport. Self-help groups, discussion groups and workshops empower older women to participate in decisions that affect them.

I support the group's request for new services and resources to tackle these concerns. The network receives limited funding from the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care and the Department of Health, and achieves a great deal with quite limited resources due to the expertise, experience and wisdom of older women.

Many older people live active and independent lives, and they have skills and knowledge that can benefit the whole community. Groups like OWN should be established across NSW in all communities.

Clover Moore

Extract from Clover's E-news Sept 2006

All that Jazz

At the last Jubilation meeting we decided that one of the joys we shared was music, and that enough of us enjoyed jazz to arrange going to a gig, so when Patti said she was volunteering at the Manly Jazz Festival we went from there. Emails flying in all directions, finding a day when some of us could go, deciding on a time and place to meet.

I had the email numbers, but no operating mobile, but another volunteer was kind enough to call Patti, and we all finally found each other among the milling crowd, and sat down to listen to the music. We poured our glasses of red 'cordial' (before we realised

it was an alcohol free zone), then relaxed and enjoyed the 'hot surf, cool jazz' that the festival provides.

So...good music, good company, good cordial. We all decided it was definitely worth putting in our Jubilation calendar for next year. (Some of us even headed back on Sunday and Monday.)

On Saturday we enjoyed the jazz at the Norfolk Hotel. Next we are planning to listen to some blues in November with the Lemon Squeezin' Daddies at Ashfield RSL, and in December, the Backsliders at the Empire Hotel.

More Jubilation and Jazz in the future.

Lorraine Inglis

Stay On Your Feet!

The Creating a Safer Community Team in partnership with Redfern & Inner City Home Support Service presents Stay On Your Feet: Falls Prevention Exercise Series.

Come and join us for afternoon tea and discover simple exercises to keep you on your feet. This fun and interactive series is suitable for seniors, those living with disabilities and their carers.

When: Fortnightly on Wednesdays (including 8 November, 22 November and 6 December).

Time: 2.30 – 3.30pm (Afternoon tea provided)

Place: Redfern Town Hall, 73 Pitt St, Redfern.

This exercise class is available to local residents at no cost. Transport can be arranged, but registration is required – to register, or if you have any questions contact the Creating a Safer Community Team on (02) 9698 7277.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Woy Woy

Woy Woy OWN celebrated its tenth Birthday on 6 September 2006, and it was a huge success. Around thirty of us gathered for a celebratory lunch at the Bayview Hotel and we all had a marvelous time. Sandra O'Malley from Centrelink, as our Guest Speaker, spoke about our achievements in reaching this milestone. Our Chairperson, Heather McKenzie, made a brief speech, and Elise Appel thanked Heather for her untiring work in organising this event, which simply would not have happened without her efforts.

We had our cake and ate it too while 'Happy Birthday' was played and we all sang along. Photos were taken of the members who attended our very first birthday.

Margaret Bramich circulated much-admired photo albums depicting members of OWN Woy Woy and some of our activities. More than any spoken word they are a visual reminder of our history and the many good times we have enjoyed together, which hold such lovely memories.

We hope this has strengthened our group and that we will continue to make a difference in the lives of our members and people around us.

Three Cheers for OWN Woy Woy!

Elise Appel

The **Quarterly Meeting** of **Sydney OWN** will be on **November 6th**, starting at **10am sharp**, to allow for the highlight of the meeting, the **Laughter Workshop**, which is to be run by **Renate Watkinson**. Please bring a plate to share.

At and Beyond the Rocks

OWN Australia 2006 Annual Conference

The conference was opened at 10am Tuesday 25th Sept. by Councillor *Pat Morris*, Mayor of Gosnells, after a welcome from *Mary Novikov*, and Noongar aboriginal elder *Marie Taylor*.

Speaker 1 was *MP Cate Doust* on the active ageing policy of WA, including a lot of facts & figures related to ageing.

Speaker 2 was *Lois Gately*, chairperson of the WA Carers Advisory Council. Lois has been a carer for her husband for 30 years, he is in a wheel chair with MS which developed in their second year of marriage. The WA govt. has passed new legislation to give more respect and dignity to carers, and this council has been set up to monitor the legislation. Lois is very aware of the needs of carers, and the importance of including them in decisions about the caree, and considering their health, wellbeing and ability as well.

Lunch was then followed by the AGM of OWN Aust. All officers retained their positions, and the meeting concluded at 2pm.

Then came fun time, options were archery, a modified netball, or the flying fox. True to form many Mackay women distinguished themselves on the flying fox, while I also heard reports of some deadly arrows being fired.

A panel discussion followed on "What Do You Want Aged Care to Look Like in the Future?" Panel

members were *Betty Johnson*, OWN NSW, *Dr. Judith Davies*, of Community Health and Women's Health, *Susie Coucher*, Director of Care & Services at Amana Living, a group of Nursing & Retirement Homes, and *Rob Willday*, Manager Home and Community Care. Discussion was facilitated by *Lois Gately*.

Betty Johnson

At 86 Betty is inspiring because she is still politically active and has many government contacts. Some of the issues raised:

- Spot checks in nursing homes.
- Police checks of nursing home staff are done by Federal Police
- Criteria for the accreditation of homes are being reviewed.
- Whistleblowers will be protected by law.
- Reporting of abuse is mandatory.
- There is concern about community services being commercialized, as they are taken over by private firms.

Dr. Judith Davies

Judith's doctorate was in the field of nursing. She was a very lively and entertaining. Judith talked about the images of older women and all the other things we are, we are all different, but mostly this is unseen as we become stereotyped and/or invisible. Her message was that we should enjoy everything in moderation, and keep active, both physically and socially.

Susie Croucher

Susie spoke about the philosophy

and standards of her organisation, which is funded by Anglicare. They stress the individuality and ongoing life development of their residents, and strive to maintain an opportunity for fulfilled living, rather than a parking station to await death. If the standards are as high as described the homes could well be a model for all.

Rob Willday

Rob is a manager of HACC, Home and Community Care, which is a state run but federally funded program, so there are probably differences between states.

Questions and general discussion was then invited from the floor. There was agreement that a one-stop shop is needed to access aged care. Access to nursing homes is also an important issue. Many people must accept a place far from their home and partner or family. OWN Australia would like to know what happens in each state, and a group has been formed to address these issues.

The guest speaker for dinner was *Carmen Lawrence*, who gave us some food for thought discussing women and war, and our choice in being politically active to oppose further wars. This was followed by some engaging folk music from the *Time Trackers*, combining some of the history of WA.

Day 2

A 7am exercise class was an option on the next two days, courtesy of *Julia Biles*, and many women participated.

An added highlight was the home cooking that was available

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for morning and afternoon teas, another display of the wonderful hospitality of the Perth group.

We began with a discussion led by *Cate Turner* on engaging younger older women to OWN. NSW. One suggestion was that we should have "speak outs", where women come together to say what they want. It was also thought that networking "from the bottom up" was the best way to go, spreading word of mouth through our members.

A session on NSW Wellness Centres followed. OWN has been very successful in NSW creating these centres which focus on maintaining wellness rather than healing sickness.

The next session included some focus on our spiritual life, our life philosophy as we age, and what is most important to us, e.g. maintaining a sense of wonder, joy of living. The speaker, *Elizabeth Millet*, quoted an ancient Chinese philosophy that we have a "sacred duty to awaken the eternal in us.

After lunch there was a choice of a theatre workshop or pampering, which involved reiki therapy. This was followed by a session on pre-paid funerals.

Dinner again was a time of celebration, and was followed by a session with the wonderful jazz singer, *June Smith*, and the *Apple Jazz Band*.

Day 3

Wednesday morning was a time for important left-over

business, and an opportunity for groups to have their final say.

There was general agreement that Medibank Private should not be sold, and Medicare services should be preserved.

An OWN member spoke on the difficulties experienced by grandparents who, through no fault of their own, now find themselves having to raise their grandchildren. Many issues emerged from this which may demand future involvement by OWN.

At 11.30 am we were picked up by bus, taken on a short tour around Fremantle & Perth, before a delightful picnic lunch in King's Park.

Feedback indicates that everyone thought the conference a great success, and we had a marvelous time. Many, many bouquets to the women of WA for all their work and generosity. I'm sure we will all keep in touch, and hope we meet again next year in the unique spirit that is the Older Women's Network.

Mary Novikov

Bankstown Wellness

We've had a very busy year with the launch of our book of stories called *In our OWN Words* and a celebration of our 10th anniversary in Bankstown.

Jan Malley, our Project Worker, has just completed the Annual Report for the NSW Department of Health, which funds our centre, and she wanted me to pass on some information to you.

Last year, 234 women

registered as participants and 16 activities were offered each week. The Wellness Centre is open 40 weeks per year and is closed during school holidays.

A number of new activities have been introduced. First the Writing Workshops, which I run once or twice a month. From those workshops we produced this wonderful book. I've also started a library that is doing brilliantly, as well as a Learn to Play Chess activity which has become very popular. We now include a "Legal Matters that Matter", workshop in our program which I facilitate.

We also introduced Relaxation on Wednesday. At first the women were not sure what this was about, but this became very popular as they began to understand the benefits of attending a regular Relaxation session.

One of the main aims of our centre is to try and reduce social isolation of many older women. I am very happy to say that over 80% of women reported that their social networks had increased by attending our Wellness Centre.

We also recently set up a new Social Committee, whose role it is to organise outings for the women and so far we have been upon the Hawkesbury River on a paddle steamer and a couple of weeks ago paid a visit to the Tulip Festival at Bowral. From now on, we hope to offer at least one social outing every term.

Last year, we found that 50% of our women were from Anglo backgrounds and 50% from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (or CALD) backgrounds. In Bankstown there are over 160 different languages spoken and women reported (on their

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Registration forms) that they spoke Greek, Arabic, French, (from Mauritius), Spanish, German, Italian, Maltese, Vietnamese, Croatian, Dutch, Polish, Macedonian, Afrikaans, Lithuanian, Japanese, Mandarin, Cantonese, and Teo Chew (all Chinese languages), Tamil, Russian, Hungarian and Estonian. This makes for a wonderful multicultural mix and many friendship have been formed between women of vastly different cultural backgrounds.

Janette and I would like to invite you to visit our Wellness Centre. Term 4 begins on Monday 16 October and we finish the year on Wednesday 20th December.

Silvana Gruber

Illawarra

The Illawarra OWN is still rockin'. All of our sub-groups, writing, play reading, current affairs and of course, the SilverTOWNS are still going strong.

In August we had a guest speaker from Wollongong Central Library, who spoke to us about all the many services provided by the local branches. Many of us were not aware of the updates at our local library-rentals of DVDs, videos, use of the computer, etc., and this information revived an interest in using the library.

An excursion at the end of the month was enjoyed by twenty of us at a local theatre, where we were entertained by the Arcadians and the Lamplighters singing groups, followed by a "cuppa". It was a really good morning.

In September, we had a visit from a local naturopath, who explained alternative therapies, and answered many questions.

One of their services was a selection of massages, and we were all tempted. (Don't know how many followed up on this!)

Perhaps, the best day was our "Funday", where we played silly games, told jokes, and stretched our brains with some quizzes. Everyone had lots of fun, and they want to have another Funday next year.

Our business meeting this month was preceded by a video, shown by Joan Hilton, called "Around The Kitchen Table". It was a short video about Reconciliation, and the diverse groups of women joining the Aboriginal women around the table discussing personal identity, and how to "build bridges" in order to understand each other a bit better. It is an excellent video, and we would highly recommend it to any groups who are interested in closing the gap between our two cultures. The video was followed by a short discussion, and we plan to have an Aboriginal woman come to speak to our group early next year.

It is gratifying to know that many different groups are now contacting our Illawarra OWN, offering their speakers to come out to our meetings. I think this area is now getting to know who we are!

Arlene Little

Housework?

Who says they've got time to do the housework,
when *OWN Matters* are lying in wait?
The singing, the dancing, and writing
with all that friendship and laughter
it's great! - [ha-ha]

So, if you say you've got time to do housework,

Then you're not out enjoying your mates.

Time to throw down that duster and iron,
and use that broomstick for flying to OWN!

Lyrics by Roma Bates-Illawarra

Newcastle

OWN (Newcastle) Inc. membership stands at approximately 32 women, and attendance at monthly meetings averages the low 20s. Many new members have joined during the last year.

Recent social outings have included bus trip to Kooragang Wetlands and Morpeth; train trip to Maitland; and coffee mornings.

Pat Carlton attended the 10th anniversary lunch for OWN Woy Woy.

We have submitted a funding application for Seniors Week 2007. Planned activities include involving a girls youth band and displaying art and craft from young people and OWN members (this arises from our re-location to The Loft, a venue for youth activities in Newcastle).

Three OWN Newcastle members recently attended a meeting of the OWN NSW Wellness Coordination Committee. These three and interested others will pursue the establishment of more wellness activities in Newcastle. Thanks for the support of this Committee and its members.

Plans to bring Sue Field (speaker on legal issues at the OWN NSW Conference) to February general meeting in Newcastle, and we'll invite Woy Woy, Wyong and Hastings OWN members (making it into a regional meeting).

Pat Carlton

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Sutherland

"Tis the season to be jolly" or so it seems. Reading last month's *OWN Matters* prompted a few calendar entries for end-of-year events, and the September meetings of both Sutherland OWN Group and the OWN Sutherland Wellness Centre Management Team spent considerable time making decisions for their respective celebratory functions. Our hard working and well experienced social organiser, Ann, has moved promptly and secured a booking for a repeat of the successful 2005 Port Hacking River Cruise. Prior to that we've planned 'Our Day at the Rocks' and a Melbourne Cup Lunch. As well as these events, we hope to succeed in our bid for a 2007 Seniors Week Grant for a 'Seniors Supporting Seniors' day trip. More on that if we're successful. All this plus plans underway for another State Sport and Rec holiday (if we can secure an appropriate booking.)

The Sutherland Shire Annual Seniors Arts and Crafts three-day Festival was again highly successful. Both the Wellness Centre and our Group worked in partnership to benefit from the exposure and the fund-raising opportunity.

Pat and Noreen were the Sutherland delegates to the OWN Australia Conference held this year in Perth. Early reports indicate it was a great success and wonderful national networking.

Several local community events have been reported on by members attending. Domestic Violence and Suicide Safety are two areas our group have discussed and are interested in

pursuing these issues on behalf of older women. Members present at our meeting were keen to participate in research into Elder Law and to contribute comment on the NSW State Plan circulated from the Premier's Department.

Community involvement is ongoing and Sutherland Group endeavours to incorporate participation in this area into all our activities.

Barbara Burnham

Bankstown Greek

I hope everyone is enjoying the lovely spring weather we've been having. I know that I am enjoying spending my time in my beautiful garden, filled with so many colours and fragrances this time of year. Our group has been very busy with many activities. Back in August, we were invited by the Lebanese Association of Bankstown to attend the Know your neighbour celebration. There were many people at this function and a fun time was had by all. There were speeches, photographs and a lot of finger food. We made a lot of new friends, exchanged ideas and phone numbers.

On Saturday 23 September, our dance group performed at Bankstown plaza. We were invited by the local council for the multicultural food day Bankstown Bites. It was the second year of the festival, and it was a huge success. There were many food stalls, cultural musical groups, and activities for everyone. We were treated by appearances from celebrity chefs including Vince Sorrenti. On Monday 25 September, we traveled by bus to Canberra to visit the Floriade. We had a most enjoyable day both in the bus and at the Floriade. On the way, we made a quick stop

at Mount Ainsley and visited the foreign embassies and war memorial.

We are preparing for 16 October when we will host a morning tea to raise funds to fight breast cancer. We will be selling pink ribbons on the day and there will be lots of finger food, drinks and cakes for all attendees. We will also have raffles and our dance group will entertain those who come along. Everyone is welcome to come and join the fun.

Connie Kondilios

Southern Highlands

Our St John Senior First Aid Course has been very good. The twelve women who did the course in September gained First Aid Certificates and all felt that they had achieved something worthwhile. There are nineteen women enrolled in the next course and hopefully they will be as successful as the first group. We will have grant money remaining for nine women to undertake the next course so we will be joining in with one of the St John courses early next year.

We have just started our third round of Tai Chi for this year, with thirty-seven people in the group. This round is an intermediate level class concentrating on improving our skills and coordinating our breathing and movements. In this way, we hope to increase the benefits we can get from Tai Chi. A number of the women have bought Tai Chi suits so the group is looking very colourful. The continuing interest in doing Tai Chi demonstrates the success of Wingecarribee Shire Council's Community Grants scheme, which enabled SHOWN to run our first Tai Chi course twelve months ago.

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It also shows how lucky we are to have our young instructor, Geyi Chen, who is willing to take time out from his busy clinic to teach us at a greatly reduced rate.

Our bustrip to Canberra to see the "Anzacs in France, 1916" Exhibition at the Australian War Memorial is on 20th October. From all reports it is a truly awe-inspiring exhibition.

We have begun planning our Christmas function to end the year. The day will start with a light luncheon followed by entertainment, which will include learning a couple of simple folk dances that can be done progressively. We are inviting everyone to either wear national costumes or dress as a woman that they admire. Should be a great day!

Robyn Smith

Wollondilly OWN

Wollondilly OWN held their first-ever elections during August and their first committee was elected. Secretary is Carol Hinte, Treasurer Gwen Porter and Social Secretary Shirley Fincher. Congratulations to our new committee. They have already proved themselves to be very hard workers for the group over a long period of time.

There is also a coordinator's team of Carol, Shirley, Gwen as well as Alicia Edwards, Elizabeth Ottersen, Olive Jones and Nancy Wright. Apologies if I have overlooked anyone, I am doing this off the top of my head.

We have a new Women's Health Worker in the Health Centre and, although she will not fill the roll our previous worker, Wendy Roberts, filled, she has

promised to support the group. As the submission for funding for Seniors Week failed to be lodged in time she is going to look to see if she can get some funding from other sources. Jacqui also has plans to raise the profile of Wollondilly OWN by having a photo display in the foyer of the Health Centre. It will be in the form of several large frames showing the group taking part in various activities as well as lots of information on the Older Women's Network and our aims. This is a very busy foyer, used as a waiting room to access Women's Health, Dental, Speech Therapy and the numerous services that make up the workload of the centre. Such an exhibition has never been mounted before and Jacqui plans to have it in place for some months.

Olive Jones continues to work at a frantic pace making all sorts of garments and objects that are used for fundraising. The group's two big fundraising events will again happen in March, with a stall at the Thirlmere Steam Festival and a Trade Table at the International Women's Day Breakfast. Funds raised at these events will be used to address the problems of social isolation in the Wollondilly area, and to fund an event in Seniors Week if no grant money is to be found.

Barbara Malcolm

THEATRE GROUP CHRISTMAS PARTY



You are cordially invited to join the Theatre Group members for their Annual Christmas Luncheon on Thursday 14 December 2006 at "The Hughendon" Queen Street, Paddington. Bookings close on 1 December.

Menu

Wild Barramundi Fillet on a Potato Gratin With Grilled Lime and Béarnaise Sauce

Or

Roast Turkey with Cranberry Pears, Seasonal Vegetables and Veal Jus

Individual Sticky Date Pudding with Brandy Crème Anglaise

Freshly brewed Coffee and a selection of Teas

\$35.00 per person (includes a glass of wine)

Please make cheques payable to OWN NSW

(Please indicate which Main Course you would like)

Exercise Bicycle for Fitting Recipient

- I thought of OWN first when I realised that I would have to get rid of my exercise bicycle because I recently moved into a much smaller house.
- The exercise bicycle is in excellent condition, and I thought perhaps one of the wellness groups might be able to use it. I am happy to donate it to either a group or individual if either would be interested. The bicycle has a digital readout to measure one's progress towards fitness.
- If anyone is interested, I can be contacted via email at phyllis_gorman@hotmail.com.au or by telephone at (02) 9818 1515.

Phyllis Gorman

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS * NEWS FROM THE GROUPS * NEWS FROM THE GROUPS * NEWS FROM THE GROUPS * NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

NEVER VOLUNTEER?

In most instances volunteering gives one a warm and fuzzy feeling, but sometimes it evokes memories of your working days in a new job. You suspect there are some bad duties you weren't told about.

I am now enmeshed in the Longitudinal Ageing Prospective Study (Eastern Sydney), conducted by Prince of Wales Hospital and University of NSW.

First came a telephone interview, followed by a mailed questionnaire (eight pages). At the same time, a close friend also received a questionnaire to complete about me but as she was in the middle of moving I refrained from bothering her about its contents.

I fronted up at Prince of Wales Hospital with my completed questionnaire, to be interviewed by a young psychologist. There followed four hours of various tests; this appeared to measure concentration, memory, and speed. I had an eyesight test, also blood pressure, my height my and weight were measured.

There was a brief interlude half way for tea and biscuits, then back to work.

I found two tasks difficult: making complicated patterns with blocks in a limited time, and remembering the main points of a story. I thought the latter would be a breeze but I had to memorise a name, street, suburb, an amount of money, number of children in a family, the problems a mother had with the police and how many weeks rent she owed. I don't think I'd make a good witness!

The last test was tapping objects with a pen on a computer screen, requiring speed and concentration. By then I was very tired and asked the tester why it was not given at the beginning. She said some subjects found it difficult and having it early would put them off the whole exercise! I quite agree.

Soon I have an 8am appointment at the hospital for a blood test, and then a balance test. In the meantime, I have completed another questionnaire (21 pages), to mail back. My friend, (the one now in the throes of unpacking), has received another questionnaire about me.

It will be reassuring to be monitored every six months by telephone, regarding my health, memory and day-to-day activities. In several years' time there will be another assessment at the hospital, provided, of course, that I am still part of the human race.

My doctor told me the tests would be fun. Her optimism was somewhat misplaced. I think four hours is too long to concentrate on mental gymnastics. Even school exams aren't that long. However, I am convinced that the study is very worthwhile and should provide valuable data about memory and ageing.

I will soldier on until such time that the testers decide that I am too doddery to make patterns with blocks, or my friend tells them I have lost the plot.

Helen McMaugh

Choose a woman for UN - Vaira Vike-Freiberga

M. Kofi Annan's mandate as Secretary General to the United Nations is coming to an end in December 2006. Candidates are already beginning to emerge.

According to the regional rule, it is time for an Asian candidate to take over the responsibilities of this task. However, nothing is definite and the debate continues.

Women represent more than half of the world population. They are becoming increasingly involved in international affairs and many form the futures of their countries. Why shouldn't one be nominated to the head of the UN?

Choosing a woman as Secretary General of the UN would be a symbol of this organisation's support for women's rights and would send an important message to the world.

The role of Secretary General to the UN is essential in guaranteeing peace and globalisation of a more humane nature. Naming a woman to this post as Secretary General would help to shape the 21st Century into one of modernity and respect.

A global initiative was launched by the association *Femmes Débat & Société* to promote this issue. A website is available: www.chooseawomanforum.eu on which you will find a petition that has already gathered more than 2200 signatures in just a few days.

Sign the petition! Send it to all those you know!

[NOTE: the Web address is [forum](http://www.chooseawomanforum.eu), not [forum](http://www.chooseawomanforum.eu)]

Dorothy Cora

Think About that

Feelings are not always fact,
think about that.
The fact is
Here I am at last,
feelings are from the past,
Get into the here and now,
This is all I have.
This moment,
think about that.
Where am I right now?
WOW!!!
I've come a long way,
I'm here to stay,
Looking to the future,
Think about that.
I, and You.
Us and Them.
One and All.
Think about that.

Laraine Sullivan
Sunday 03/09/06 Father's Day

Letters to the Editor

Hope Springs Eternal in the Human Breast

Well it surely does in mine, I thought as I studied every page of *OWN Matters*, and assiduously noted in my diary all the happenings I longed to go to.

Ellin's class, Wellness, Pearlie's Group, films, talks, plays - my diary is full of them - and I haven't been able to go to any for God knows how long - probably since my last fall.

Oh how I've missed them - and all the lovely people I've enjoyed them with.

But, I'll make it to the laughter class, and the Superb, Funny Musical Review, if it kills me!

Actually I do a rather good Walking Stick Act, which is yours for the asking.

(Note - Walking Stick Act)

Dorothy Cox

I've made a note of that Dorothy, and added you to the running order for the next Quarterly Meeting! - Beth

Why OWN Matters

The last two issues for OWN Matters have held so much especially Lucy Porter's story of the lack of government subsidised emergency help when one is temporarily ill or disabled. Exactly three years ago OWN published my account of three weeks coping with pneumonia. Because I was neither febrile nor in acute respiratory distress I could not be admitted to hospital, even a private one. The GP suggested Meals on Wheels, available but not really appetizing. We all know and applaud Betty Johnson's work in health related matters, but does she work alone? Perhaps some of our younger, older women would care to do some lobbying about this. I have just recovered from six weeks of bronchitis which discouraged me from

telephoning our sick members for which I am truly sorry. Louise's article on whistleblowers and Renate's on the generation gap made me say 'Yes, yes'.

Last week our newspapers and radios had much to say about generations and the gaps therein, the dreaded Baby Boomers and their offspring generations x and y. Nobody seems to remember the Baby Boomers' parents, that other D-generation. We are now somewhat shrunken, both individually and in numbers and those still alive preoccupied with whatever bits of us are degenerating enough to bother us. But, we still have our passions, our enthusiasms, while measuring distance in metres not miles or considering the use of a walking frame.

Today we are apprehensive of a nuclear test to the north of us, many are unhappy by the proposed incursion on to the states' area of responsibility, education. The idea that our curricula are deficient and should be replaced and centralised, so that the minds of our grandchildren can be stultified into dull conformity and acceptance of the status quo. Our country is immense and what is needed in Hobart may be vastly different from that in Broome or Bendigo. No one will deny the importance of the 'story' in history, nor dispute the beauty of, say, *The Tempest* or the poetry of Virgil. But it is only wealthy schools, those 'awash with cash' who can afford excursions to the theatre or employ Latin teachers to introduce students to the beauty of that language. A teacher in Sydney's south west may have to settle for Big Brother, which would need a brilliant teacher to deconstruct that in a spirit of enquiry and empathy. Good teachers manage very well with the material they have and it is to be hoped they will resist this shabby attempt to grab more power.

Scribbling this in the comfort of my armchair I am like Renate grateful to

those inspirational women, the founders of OWN, and glad of those 'kindred spirits' our membership all of us belong to those 'left liberal intelligentsia' so feared by the likes of our uninspiring prime minister. Above all we may be 'different' but never indifferent, for indifference means the persistence of that miserable status quo.

Helen Monaghan

Location Matters

My friend, who lives across the street, has just retired from full time employment. Her husband has been retired for a couple of years due to ill health.

He had an operation and since he is home a person calls twice a day to see to his dressings and my friend was offered, and accepted, someone to clean the house on a regular basis, at no cost.

My neighbour a few doors away, broke her wrist and was given home help within a few days, at no cost.

Another neighbour broke her ankle and was also given home help, at no cost.

When I broke my foot I was offered home help, but I did not need it so I declined.

All this has been courtesy of City of Sydney Council.

Perhaps Lucy, you would have been better trying your local council. If they are anything like City of Sydney Council, you might have struck it lucky. I have always found CoS to be very user friendly when bad times hit. I am not saying that one can get everything one asks for, but the help my neighbours have had would have been great for you in the circumstances.

Hope things are good for you now.

Josie Jackson

Letters cont.

Reflections from WA

I'm writing in response to Louise Anike's article earlier in the year in *OWN Matters* on 'Abuse of Women in Age Care Facilities'. Fortunately Louise was not as severely affected by the second stroke as she was by the first. I owe her a lot. We have been pen friends for almost fifty years, from the time our children were small, now they are adults and married.

As to Elder Abuse in Hostels, the main essential seems to be to ensure where possible, that you know where you are going - to a professionally run establishment with 'adequate' staff.

Fortunately I am in a small hostel, which is reasonably well run, without any male staff, but we are 'copping' an increasing number of male residents who need extra care. All the men coming in over the last year need showering, (including one who is wheel-chair bound), and a lot of personal care.

Anyway now we have a new Manager (Nursing Home) who also 'oversees' the Hostel. This Manager stunned residents at a meeting by asking them direct questions, this had never done before!

My only problems now are trying to write legibly - not everyone can read my backhand writing, and I am having to cope with increasing deafness, and decreasing vision. I subscribe to the *American Digest* (large print) as I was unable to find anything in Australia to read except Braille. I have sufficient sight to use a monocular lens vision aid, so am able to read without carrying heavy Braille books around. *Australian Readers Digest* will assist you to contact the American Association.

Margaret Payne WA

The above is an extract of a much longer letter that has been sent on to Louise Anike. Ed

Don Brown's *There's a Demo on Tomorrow* (abridged)

. . . Where the bloody hell are they, those lost, clear-headed days,
When I was mentally equipped to navigate the maze.
The days when things were orderly, and lost things quickly found,
When I could see obscure things, and hear the faintest sound?
And where are the ideals that seemed attainable back then.
Now put in the too hard box, and never seen again. . .
Like, who looks after all the old, less fortunate than me,
And the hopeless little kids caught up in endless poverty?
Where the bloody hell are they, the ones who wanted peace
Who proudly shouted their dissent above the thought police?
The ones who marched beside us to advance a noble cause,
The fostering of friendship and the end of bloody wars.
The rights of working people to be paid what they're worth,
Or our reconciliation with the oldest race on earth?
And the saving of our planet from the ravages of greed,
A hand up for the humble and for everyone in need . . .
It seems that every generation fights the same damn fights
For a bit of peace and justice and basic human rights.
And where the bloody hell is it, this paradise we sought?
It isn't any closer for all the wars we've fought.
I keep on seeing faces racked with misery and pain
And wonder if I've got the strength to fight their fight again.
"And where the bloody hell are you?" The sun-tanned lass enquires
And beckons to us fetchingly, rekindling old desires.
She calls to people everywhere in tones that drip with honey
Assuring them a welcome if they come to spend some money.
And they will come and they will spend and we'll all be delighted
And no one even notices the ones whose hopes are blighted.
They aren't the smiling happy ones on whom we seem to dote,
They struggle here from war torn lands aboard a leaking boat.
They come from desperate struggles and from circumstances dire
And wind up with their children fenced behind tons of razor wire.
"Where the bloody hell are you?" my wife breaks in at last
I'm wrenched back to the present from the worries of the past.
"I've found your bloody car keys, and the discount petrol docket,
You changed into your working duds and left them in your pocket.
"Your daughter rang a while ago, I looked but couldn't find you.
There's a demo on tomorrow and she wanted to remind you." . . .
And suddenly I'm young again with all my juices flowing
There's a demo on tomorrow, and by bloody hell I'm going!

Don Brown

(With sincere thanks to Don Brown for permission to reprint this poem and to the "CPSA" for sending us a copy in their newsletter "The Voice")

Our OWN Stories

The following beautiful story from the book 'In Our Own Words' was contributed by writing workshop leader Silvana Gruber.

The Beauty of Sound

The day had finally arrived and, with bags packed, I was ready to go on my so-called retreat.

It was a beautiful day – glorious sunshine teamed with a clear blue sky. I said to myself, this is a good omen.

On arrival an extremely pleasant young lady, well groomed and looking very professional in her blue uniform, welcomed me. She showed me to my room, where soft relaxing music from the TV monitor was playing, and a view through a large framed pastel-curtained window was appealing.

Wow! How could it be, but this holiday retreat is getting better by the minute!

After a well conducted orientation, I was settled down for a restful night and hopefully a peaceful uninterrupted sleep. A strange room, with a comfortable bed... I was in and out of a deep sleep, but aware of any new sound filling the darkness. How lovely it was to hear the long awaited rain pounding on the roof. It was quite heavy at times, then easing off to light showers. Then the drip, drip, drip of the raindrops added to the ever-changing sounds of nature, or maybe it was the dripping sounds coming from the much needed repairs of the guttering.

In the early break of dawn I could hear the sea rolling onto the beach, then breaking with such force that it ran up the sloping sandy beach. The birds were chirping loudly, convincing me of the start of a beautiful sunshine day. But this early morning also brought the sound of a microwave beeping for someone's cup of tea.

The morning came and so did reality. I surveyed my room; everything seemed to be in order. However, looking out of the window, things were a little different. There was no sea, no rain had been falling, there were no birds and there was no microwave. What had happened? Where had I been for the last few days?

Gathering myself together in the quietness of my room, I listened and concentrated on the sounds and noises. Surprise, surprise, the sound of the rolling sea must have come from the surge of the flushing toilet and that drip, drip, drip came from the saline drip in my arm. The sound of the rain must have been coming from the pan room, on again, off again, running water. The chirping of those birds came from the cut off button of the TV monitor and it's easy to understand that the microwave beep came from the emergency button being pressed by patients in the adjoining room.

I suppose by now you can realize I am in hospital, the medication after the operation is gradually wearing off and I will soon be facing my daily routine of rehabilitation.

I must say I am thankful to Silvana for her writing classes and her teaching to be aware of thoughts, sights, sounds and situations, even under these very demanding hospital nights.

O what a difference a day makes!

Barbara McDonall

Latte Headed

There they were – the geraniums, in all colors, in the planter boxes encircling the Biergarten of the Bavarian Restaurant right opposite the little beach and my place. Oh you brave beautiful things, I thought, may you survive the wild southerlies and never stop flaunting yourselves. How my fingers itched to deadhead them. And of course it wasn't long before I did just that. No, I wasn't accosted by the management but I just got chatting to the waiter, Steve, and gave him my instructions. Next time passing, Dave, the boss man consulted me. Yes, I said, you must remove the deadheads, don't over water, once a week is plenty and if you feed with Seasol or equivalent you won't believe their glory. Then he refused payment for my café latte and I went off so happy I forgot my shopping.

Dorothy Cox

Women's Action & Information Group (WAIG) Annual Seminar Mothers and Daughters

All women are daughters and some of us are mothers to daughters. Either way this is a central relationship to us all. Enjoy a light hearted exploration of this vital relationship with Playback Theatre and guest panel speakers Margot Mann and Terri Janke.

All women welcome for this entertaining afternoon
18 November 2006

1pm registration for 1.30 start until 5pm
Afternoon tea provided

Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Centenary Centre
180 Longueville Rd Lane Cove

Cost: \$25, Members \$20, concessions \$15

Bookings and Enquiries:

Ph: 9428 3317 or email: waig@iprimus.com.au

AGM to follow at 5pm over glass of wine
Membership renewals welcomed.

OWN ADVOCACY

Sixteen Days of Activism for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

25 November to 10
December

Several young women were shot dead in Canada by a young man who said he hated feminists. This awful act and the assassination of three sisters who were political activists in the Dominican Republic gave rise to the custom of wearing a white ribbon to show personal support for strong and continuous objection to violence against women anywhere in the world, regardless of age, creed and culture.

Violence against women has existed for a long, long time. The shocking tragedy in Canada gave rise to lots of hard work being done to create a global awareness. The pervasive and widespread nature of violence against women in the family, the community and at the hand of state agents moved the U.N. to recognise the International White Ribbon Day.

We need to bring as much pressure as possible on the community and governing powers to make earnest and determined endeavours to stop these dreadful incidents, such as the recent slaughter of five young Amish schoolgirls in Pennsylvania.

Community acknowledgement is necessary, hand in hand with governments making adequate budget allowance for all and any resources, along with a passionate belief and political persuasion to take serious steps to reduce this terrible violence and hatred directed towards women.

For these reasons we are asking you to show your strength and support, and join us for the Sydney OWN White Ribbon Morning Tea on 20 November at 10.30am, 87 Lower Fort Street.

Louise Anike

Sydney OWN White Ribbon Day 20 November

Join us at 10.30 for a scrumptious morning tea to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

Speakers include: Associate Professor Jane Mears from the University of Western Sydney, Betty Green from the Domestic Violence Committee Coalition and Constable Dean Stanbury, Domestic Violence Liaison Officer with The Rocks Police Station.

We will also be dazzled with a guest appearance by some members of the Theatre Group performing a song from their influential domestic violence show. Definitely a day not to be missed. Please ring the office on 9247 7046, and let us know if you will be joining us – for catering purposes.

No Retreat.

With this incubus on our backs in the form of John Howard and his Liberal government, which every week redefines still further how we feel about Australia, I find I am retreating further and further inside my comfortable world of reading, gardening and meeting friends occasionally. I don't want to fade into this state of comfortable euphoria just yet even though my family

constantly tell me that at 86 this is what I should be doing. But with the future of the world and particularly our own country looking so bleak, I find it hard to enjoy completely the good life I have by doing absolutely nothing.

Today, reading the morning paper in the sun with my cup of coffee, I realised that there is something I can do. One little thing (that one person multiplied by a hundred) can do to be a little useful is to send an email or a letter to government members.

I read about about the Liberal backbencher, Petrou Georgio, who has rubbished the Government's planned citizenship test and has warned his party of the growing dominance of the right wing conservative elements. I straightaway sent a congratulatory email to Mr Georgiu. Not much, I know, but a few hundred emails from people like me might help to "Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood," of those Liberal backbenchers who have been bravely dissenting from Howard's iron grip, like his plan to process all refugees off shore, his proposed citizenship requirements which would make immigrants wait four years instead of two, require a good command of English and answer questions on "our values," as well as other human rights issues, refugees, civil liberties and so on. Mr Georgiu went on to say that those who represented "the liberal stream of thought" were being hounded.

I hope OWN members who feel like me will take up their pens or sit at their computers and send off a few well chosen words of support. I'm told MPs do take notice of correspondence if it's large enough. It's all I can do now, I'm afraid. I won't even be able to sit for more than an hour or so on an election table unless there is a toilet near by, thanks to my medication.

Ah well, as Bette Davis said ruefully, "Old age is not for wimps."

Muriel Hortin

OWN ADVOCACY

Fair Pay Fair Play?

The venue is the Wollongong Steelers Club. As the room fills up there's an air of awkward politeness that is broken abruptly minutes later by the arrival of a Labour Council rep. He speaks loudly, he is very annoyed. Standing toe-to-toe with Jade, the PR woman with the commercially trained smile, he is intent on presenting the Labour Council views on this Fair Pay Commission business.

During the ten minute wrangle that follows we learn two things:

1. There will be no Fair Pay Commissioner in attendance this evening (Jade keeps telling anyone who will listen that there was to be a Commissioner present but she took ill just an hour or so ago).

2. The Consultation Meeting, as this gathering is now called, permits only individual views to be expressed.

Seemingly outraged at the futility of this meeting's aims, the Labour Council rep. stomps out of the room, with a number of others in his wake. We wouldn't mind leaving too, but we came to learn and to report back, so here we sit, grim in our determination.

The only person in the room who has any idea what the Fair Pay Commission is really about is the man crouching down near us, who introduces himself as a member of the Commission's staff. Seizing this opportunity to ask a question, one of us asks what consideration is the Commission giving to people and groups who will be indirectly affected by the decisions the Commission makes? Pensioners, for example, disabled people and so on.

His reply is delivered gently. We could be in a hospital corridor hearing the doctor report on our sick relative. "This type of question is not part of the brief", he explains, "our task tonight lies in another area entirely". The man stands up and moves on to the next table. We bite down hard on our biscuits - the tone has been set for the rest of the meeting.

Soon there's a hushed silence and a power point display begins. It informs us, with diagrams and spatial maps, that groups of all kinds had previously been allowed to forward their submissions; now it is the turn of interested and concerned individuals to have their say.

Stapled sheets of official-looking forms are handed out. Each of the five pages bears a question:

1. What issues do you think the Australian Fair Pay Commission should consider when it sets and adjusts wages?

2. Based on your experiences and understanding, what do you think are the major issues for people on low wages?

3. What factors do you think influence people's decision to enter or stay in the workforce? For instance, level of pay, benefits or assistance, family responsibilities, long-term career prospects.

4. Among other things, the Commission is considering the provision of a safety net for the low-paid - what are your views on that?

5. The Commission is also setting and adjusting wages for juniors, trainees and people with disabilities, which are different from the standard adult rate. What issues should the Commission consider to make sure these groups stay competitive in the labour market?

Talk about hospitals - it was like running down a series of corridors, trying to find the right door, the right ward, the right doctor or nurse to tell us exactly what was going on.

We came away feeling that the meeting had been a waste of our time. There was no effort made to find out anything about the individuals (or the groups they represented); we concluded it was just a showy example of going through the motions. Still, Jade managed the evening with superb efficiency; you could even call it *crowd control with a smile*.

Meg Coulson & Pearlie McNeill

Drinking juice lowers Alzheimer's risk

A new report suggests that drinking fruit and vegetable juice can dramatically reduce the chances of developing Alzheimer's disease.

Researchers in Japan and the United States followed 2,000 volunteers for up to 10 years, monitoring their consumption of juices. The research, published in the American Journal of Medicine, found that the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease was reduced by 76 per cent among people who drank fruit and vegetable juices more than three times a week.

The effect was particularly strong among people at high risk of the disease, such as those who were less physically active.

The researchers believe chemicals with potential health benefits, called polyphenols, provide the protection.

They say further studies are needed to find out which juices have a particularly powerful effect.

BBC

www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems



A Program That Works

Wellness Stories by Older Women for Older Women

I've worked with participatory research and evaluation for over 20 years. The evaluation that became *Kicking Up Autumn Leaves* is one that stands out for me for two reasons – the importance of what we discovered about older women's wellness, and the exciting way we conducted the evaluation.

Often, an evaluation methodology is mentioned only in passing. But the way we did this evaluation is integral to the rich findings in this report. So as well as the wonderful stories of wellness in our report, look out too for the story of how the evaluation occurred. It is also a story of wellness.

The evaluation team was a partnership between 15 people – OWN members, researchers (Prof. Stuart Hill and myself) and health professionals. We called ourselves the Creative Reference Group, and it was creativity that enabled us to work together so well – the creativity involved in being open to experiment and willing to let things unfold. Alongside this were high levels of responsibility and goodwill, fun, collages, singing and poetry, constant learning and sharing of power. Similar traits to those found in Wellness groups.

Some reflections from members of the Creative Reference Group:

· Three Health Professionals: *We trusted one another... I want to talk about the pleasure – yeah pleasure is a good word... The biggest learning for me was to sit back and realize where the wisdom and experience lay. A big awakening.*

· OWN woman: *I always wondered whether true collaborative research was*



somewhat of a pipe dream. The miracle has happened on both sides – the fact that the bureaucrats, the academics and the consumers could be so completely and excitedly on the same wavelength seems the most amazing part of this experience.

· Two OWN women: *There's an equality in this project I've never experienced, and that's what loosened our tongues... and tongues were loosened. Not only in the decision-making group but also amongst the 43 women who shared their stories.*

Women offered profound accounts of their lives. Stories of sadness, grief, managing illness, overcoming isolation and depression – interwoven with stories of friendship, learning, belonging – interwoven with stories of liberation and social action. Sometimes in the one story.

The stories are about personal transformation as well as social engagement. They are alive, they shine. The reach of these stories goes beyond just older women... my 32 year-old neighbour read one and said 'that's me!' They are Good News Stories. They don't predict doom, highlight troubles, or monitor disaster (as a lot of research can). Instead, they provide evidence of initiative and determination by older women to nurture wellness, contradicting theories that older women are a burden to society and to the health purse.

All this richness - triggered by women's involvement in OWN wellness activities.

We chose a story-harvesting approach in this evaluation and, importantly, the older women were interviewed by ten of their peers, not by the researchers. Older women, together with others in the Creative Reference Group, designed the interview questions. And, later, eight older women were part of the team who analysed the stories.



Recently two economists commented in the *Sydney Morning Herald* about the importance of spending more of the allocated health dollars on health promotion. Paul Gross: 'We have to relearn how to take care of ourselves. The challenge is to create positive health-care experiences.' Ross Gittins: 'Treasury should be promoting rigorous public evaluation of health promotion programs to build up a body of evidence on what works and what doesn't'.

OWN Wellness has already risen to the challenge to create positive health-care experiences and this evaluation, *Kicking up Autumn Leaves*, provides evidence of a program that works.

Judy Pinn

Pap Tests Still Necessary

Over the past 30 years the number of cervical cancer deaths in the United States has dropped by half to 4000 deaths a year. The main reason for the decrease is the Pap test, which screens for the disease. Now cervical cancer prevention has entered a new era, with the recent approval by the Federal Drug Authority of a vaccine against human papillomavirus (HPV). Scientists believe certain strains of this virus cause nearly all cervical cancers. Although the vaccine promises to save lives, it won't make Pap tests unnecessary.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that all eleven and twelve-year-old American girls get the shots, although girls as young as nine could receive it. For "catch-up," the CDC also recommends that girls and women age 13–26 be vaccinated.

With the HPV vaccine, Pap test screening could begin later in life and be done less often. But for now, it is still essential. The new vaccine doesn't protect against all strains of HPV, including those that may account for about 30% of cervical cancers. Regular Pap tests remain the best way for early detection of those cancers.

Extracted from Harvard Health Letter, September, 2006

NOTICES

Applications are open for the Australian Virtual Centre for Leadership for Women (CLW) 2007 National Leadership Achievement Award for Women.

The CLW Leadership Achievement Award has been established to recognise women in the community who use their own initiative to create and implement projects for the benefit of the community and in collaboration with the community. The Leadership Achievement Award is open to all Australian women 18 years and above. Individuals can nominate themselves for the Award or be nominated by someone else.

As CLW's primary vision is to promote women and their achievements, applications for this award should indicate a commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment. The Project being discussed should be respectful of gender, race, religion and age.

The winner of the Leadership Achievement Award will receive: a CLW Leadership Achievement Award Certificate, publication of their profile in CLW; an Honorary Membership for CLW for 4 years and a prize of A\$1000. The Finalist will receive: a CLW Leadership Certificate a complimentary CLW Membership for 2 years; publication of their profile in CLW and a prize of A\$500. The four Short-listed Applicants will receive: a CLW Leadership Achievement Award Certificate, a complimentary CLW Membership for a year and a prize of A\$125.

Judges on the Panel are:

* Dr Jocelyne Scutt, Barrister, First Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Barrister & Human Rights Lawyer, and Executive Producer

* Dr Shirley Randell AM, Senior Adviser, Responsive and Accountable Local Government - RALG/Gender, SNV, East and Southern Africa Region - Rwanda

* Dr Lynette Dumble, Founder and Director of Global Sisterhood Network

* Carmelita Steinke, Director 2VoxFM, Radio & Media Specialist

* Avril Henry, Executive Director, AH Revelations Pty Ltd

* Cheryl O'Connor, CEO, Australian College of Educators

* Diann Rodgers-Healey, Founder, Centre for Leadership for Women

The 2007 Leadership Achievement Award is being sponsored by NRMA Motoring and Services.

Details of this Award, including statements of support from prominent female politicians as well as information about the Winners of the 2006 Award is at: www.leadershipforwomen.com.au

Applications close on 22 December 2006 and the winners are announced on 22 May 2007.

Bequests to the Older Women's Network

If you would like to include a bequest to OWN in your Will, the following options will guide you in its wording.

Please specify which Older Women's Network you wish to be the recipient of your gift: Older Women's Network NSW or the *Older Women's Network, Sydney*.

Option No. 1

I devise the sum of \$
..... to the Older Women's Network
for the general purpose of the Older Women's Network OR the specific purpose
of.....
such purpose being consistent with the aims and objectives of the Older Women's Network, to be administered by the Older Women's Network.

Option No 2

(for a proportional bequest)
I give% of my estate to the Older Women's Network for its general purpose or the specific purpose of
.....

The gift you make to OWN will be an enduring record of your generosity.

The Quarterly Meeting of Sydney OWN will be on

November 6th, starting at 10am sharp, to allow for the highlight of the meeting, the Laughter Workshop, which is to be run by Renate Watkinson. Please bring a plate to share.

OWN Sydney Notices

Subscribe NOW!

Annual subscription to *OWN Matters* is \$22 per year, these are due every JULY.

Payment method

I enclose a cheque/money order for a 6 mth subscription for \$11 made payable to OWN NSW

OR

Please debit the following credit card for \$11

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State & PC _____

Members and friends are welcome to attend all activities.

Wellness on Wednesdays

9.30am-11.45am every Wednesday

Held in Mott Hall, Argyle St., Millers Point at the terminus of 343, 339, 308, 431 and 433. Our program of gentle exercise and tai chi, at \$4 per session, are lead by accredited facilitators. Early cuppas and morning tea are free, why not bring a sandwich and stay for lunch and a chat?

Film Discussion group

Tuesday, 14 November

You are invited to join with us to see *Little Miss Sunshine*, and then have something to eat. Please ring Yetty on 9665 2050 to check the session time. Other films recommended for viewing are *The Cave of The Yellow Dog* and *Sketches of Frank Gehry*.

Creative Movement

Every Thursday at Mott Hall, 10.15am. Call office 9247 7046

OWN UP — Unashamedly Political Discussion Group

10.30am-1pm, Friday, 17 November.

The group will meet again at 75 Windmill Street, Millers Point.

Have an early cuppa with us and bring a sandwich for lunch. Contact Pearlle on 02 4285 5373 or e-mail pearliej@bigpond.net.au

Inner-West Networking group

- **Every 2nd Saturday (11 Nov)** from 2-4pm **IWNG Meeting** - Leichhardt Market Place, Cnr Marion & Flood Streets, (Community Room ground floor behind Tandy), Networking, mutual support, sharing interests, social activities. **25 Nov** Discussion topic: **“What Stops You from Asking for Help?”** facilitated by Renate Watkinson.

Buses serving the area are: 470, 435, 436, 437, and 438

All OWN members are welcome. Just turn up, or contact the OWN office on 9247 7046 or Jan on 9692 9400 OWN Members from other areas are welcome! *See diary pages for dates.*

Laughter Workshop - 10 am, 6 Nov, see page 3 for details.

Jubilation - reaching out to retirees,(see pages 7 & 9) all OWN members welcome. Various activities and monthly meetings.

6pm-8.30pm, Friday, 17 November, at 87 Lower Fort St. Bring food & drink to share, a gold coin donation is appreciated. RSVP essential. Leave a message for Terry on 9247 7046.

**IF UNDELIVERED PLEASE RETURN TO:
Older Women's Network NSW Inc.
87 Lower Fort Street
Millers Point NSW 2000**

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